

Maud Bracke

Which socialism, Whose détente?



**West European
Communism and
the Czechoslovak
crisis of 1968**



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*West European Communism
and the Czechoslovak crisis, 1968*

MAUD BRACKE



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*I dedicate this book to the memory
of Wouter Masschelein, who spoke to me
of boundaries and their absence*

INTRODUCTION

The history of Europe in the second half of the twentieth century is the history of the continued search for radical social change. In 1968, two different strands of social protest, in two very different contexts, culminated in an amorphous movement that seemed capable, for a brief moment, of destabilizing the political order on the continent. While in Czechoslovakia the leaders and activists of the Prague Spring experimented with ideas of “socialism with a human face” and alternatives to the Soviet model, in France and elsewhere in the West new forms of protest against the absurdities of capitalism were joined by traditional revived forms of protest against its injustices.

When Warsaw Pact troops invaded Czechoslovakia on the night of 20–21 August 1968, thus forcefully ending the Prague Spring, nearly all the West European communist parties protested against it. Among them were the largest two communist parties of Western Europe, the Italian PCI (*Partito comunista italiano*) and the French PCF (*Parti communiste français*). Their open disagreement with Soviet foreign policy was an historic event for both these parties, never to be repeated in the case of the PCF. However, the dramatic events in the summer of 1968 did not lead the two parties to break their ties with the Soviet Union and the “world communist movement” led by it.¹ As a result, both parties came to accept at least some of the implications of Soviet-imposed “normalization” after 1968 in Czechoslovakia and in the world communist movement. Nonetheless, the Czechoslovak crisis had profound but complex and indirect impacts on these parties, their identity, their internationalism, and their domestic strategies and legitimation.

I wish to gain insight into the logic of “internationalism” of the Italian and French communist parties in the era of East–West détente between the late 1950s and late 1970s.² The nexus of the present analysis is the tension created in these parties, between their continued adherence to Soviet-defined internationalism, and the new challenges in the 1960s provoked by

the East–West détente. The *inescapability*, to these parties, of belonging to the “world communist movement” was more complex than simply a matter of dependency on the Soviet Union. The aim is to study these parties’ continued adherence to the Soviet-dominated communist world in an attempt to understand it historically. I study the international loyalties and orientations of these parties in their own terms, bringing out their inner contradictions and connecting them to issues of party identity, domestic strategy and politics, and the dynamics of the Cold War. I do so by providing a detailed, source-based analysis of the responses to, and the short- and mid-term impact of, the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968–1969.

As will be argued, the 1968–1969 Czechoslovak crisis—the Prague Spring, the Soviet-led invasion of the country, and the so-called “normalization” of the country and of the Soviet-aligned communist world between late 1968 and 1970—was, first and foremost, a major crisis of European détente. While the Prague Spring was made possible, partly, by the immediate and unchecked consequences of early détente in Czechoslovakia and Europe, its crushing sharply brought out the contradictions of détente as it was understood by the global Cold War protagonists.³ In a similar way as the Czechoslovak crisis reflected the ambivalence at the heart of détente, the West European CP’s responses to it revealed the ambivalence of détente as a context for radical social change, either in the East or the West. The scholarly literature on the PCI and PCF has, often in an unproblematic way, understood the shift from Cold War to détente on the European continent in the mid-1960s as a development essentially positive to these parties. The present study argues against this and demonstrates how the shift from the Cold War of the 1950s to détente in Europe *reformulated* the impasse of revolution or radical change in the West, rather than putting an end to it.

The Czechoslovak crisis made explicit how problematic Soviet-aligned internationalism was in the West, not primarily because it revealed the communist parties’ ideological or material dependence on the Soviet Union as has been argued in the literature, but because it revealed the contradictions of their *strategic* dependence on Moscow. The basic problem—namely, what the invasion of Czechoslovakia revealed regarding Soviet strategic interests in Europe—was common to both the PCI and PCF. It was the background to this problem which differed in the two cases—namely, the very different status of the two countries in the Cold War and détente. It is this which makes the comparison between the French

and Italian communist parties so revealing in terms of the effects of the rise of détente on domestic politics in Western Europe.

The time-frame in which this research is set is the period between 1956, which marked the Khrushchevist turn in the communist world, and 1979, which saw both the end of the thaw in international politics and the end of Eurocommunism. This study deals essentially with the question of continuity and change: in what sense were the responses of the West European communist parties to the Czechoslovak crisis the outcome of the changes which these parties had undergone since 1956, and how did these events further change their internationalist orientations in the 1970s? Accordingly, the analysis is organized into three parts on a chronological basis. These are preceded by a first chapter, which introduces the historiography, the central concepts, the comparative method, and the contexts in which the study is set. The three parts correspond to: (i) the *causes* behind the fact that the invasion of Czechoslovakia provoked a crisis in the West European communist parties (1956–1967); (ii) the analysis of the *crisis* itself (1968–1969); and (iii) the *consequences* of it on these parties and their internationalism (1970–1979).

The first part dwells largely on secondary literature, and additionally on primary sources regarding specific questions on which little can be found in the historiography, such as relations between the West European communist parties. It is the second part which contains the bulk of the original research and the crux of the analysis. It reconstructs the Czechoslovak crisis in both parties in a detailed way and is based largely on internal party records. The positions of, and debates inside, the two party leaderships throughout 1968–1969 will be discussed following a rather strict chronology, as an attempt to reconstruct the conditions under which these positions shifted. In the third part, the narrative of the changes inside the two parties up to 1970 is based on primary sources, and the discussion of their internationalism during the 1970s and up to the end of Eurocommunism is based on the secondary literature.

The bulk of the primary sources used for this study are the archives of the PCI and the PCF. The minutes of the meetings of all the leading bodies of the PCI, as well as correspondence with other communist parties and internal reports, are accessible at the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci in Rome. A very rich collection of the private papers of Enrico Berlinguer was made accessible by the same institute in 2003. In the case of the PCF,

the agendas and conclusions of the meetings of the leading organs were accessible at the headquarters of the Parti communiste in Paris at the time of my consultation in 2002–2003. The PCF archives also included at the time of my consultation a collection of correspondence with other communist parties, as well as internal notes and reports. To gain a more complete picture of the situation in the communist world during the Czechoslovak crisis, I have consulted the archives of the East German Sozialistische einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED), which present a very rich collection of correspondence, study documents and analyses, and reports of meetings. Next to this, the party periodicals of the PCI and PCF have been consulted extensively for the period 1968–1970. The positions of the other political forces in Italy and France, particularly those of the Left, have been reconstructed on the basis of the press of the various formations and parties of the non-communist Left for the same period.⁴

NOTES

- 1 For a definition of “world communist movement,” see chapter 1.
- 2 For a working concept of internationalism, see chapter 1.
- 3 For a periodization of détente, see chapter 1.
- 4 Details regarding the primary sources and their locations can be found in the annexe at the end of the book.

CHAPTER 1.

West European Communism and Internationalism Theoretical and Analytical Framework

In this framework chapter I introduce the main analytical and conceptual tools on which the analysis of the French and Italian communist parties and their internationalism, strategy and ideology, is based. These tools include a working concept of “proletarian internationalism,” and a method for understanding the varieties of internationalism, over time as well as between cases.¹ Furthermore, I propose a set of hypotheses on the longer-term significance of the Czechoslovak crisis to Cold War history, to the history of the communist world, and to West European communism specifically. I then introduce the contexts in which the analysis is set, that is to say, domestic politics in Italy and France between 1956 and the late 1970s, developments in the Soviet-aligned communist world in the same period, and Cold War developments and international relations. The chapter starts with a discussion of the existing literature on West European communism and the Czechoslovak crisis.

1. INTERNATIONALISM AND WEST EUROPEAN COMMUNISM IN THE LITERATURE

The literature dealing with West European communism has not addressed the impact of the Czechoslovak crisis in a systematic way. This is so despite the fact that the Czechoslovak crisis is invariably noted as a significant moment in the histories of these parties, and that a widespread intuition exists as to the dramatic impact of the 1968 events. The lack of systematic research is primarily due to the non-availability, until recently, of primary sources on the topic. Furthermore, the literature on West European communism and internationalism as a whole features some shortcomings, due to the analytical perspectives that are commonly adopted. I will now discuss

some of these shortcomings, before giving an overview of the interpretations offered in the literature on the impacts of the Czechoslovak crisis on the PCI and PCF.

1.1. *Scholarship on communism and Cold War biases*²

The literature on (West European) communism has often been ideologically inspired. Not surprisingly, this is particularly the case with respect to the issue of internationalism and the political, ideological, material and symbolic ties which West European communist parties maintained with the Soviet Union and other socialist states. A central question that runs through all of the literature on West European communism, either explicitly or implicitly, regards the tension between national belonging and internationalism. Somewhat simplifying, it can be assessed that the works on West European communism written during the Cold War have either understood internationalism as necessarily antagonistic to “national interests,” or have, inversely, minimized the importance of internationalism in an attempt to highlight the truly national character of these parties. Politically or ideologically inspired positions correspond to these different approaches. While, generally, scholars hostile to Soviet-aligned communism held an antagonistic view on internationalism and domestic interests, those who wished to downplay internationalism and loyalty to the Soviet Union were most often sympathetic to (Soviet) communism. The first type of approach was concerned with denouncing the dependence of these parties on the Soviet Union. It has, therefore, failed to perceive a dynamic interaction between national belonging and belonging to an international movement, and has often been unwilling to problematize the notion of national interest. The second type of approach, concerned with downplaying Soviet influences on the politics of these parties, has often failed to grasp the absolute centrality of internationalism to the identities, motivations and strategies of communist party leaders and militants. It should be emphasized, however, that the attempt here is by no means to seek a non-ideological or post-ideological position. The point of departure is, rather, that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of Soviet-aligned internationalism shifts the perspective of the historian into one that needs neither to justify Soviet-aligned internationalism nor to denounce it for immediate political reasons, but which can start comprehending the phenomenon by fully contextualizing it.

Before the mid-1960s, the literature on West European communism

consisted roughly of two types. Firstly, an Anglo-American school of communist studies emerged in the 1950s; its point of departure was US foreign policy interests and its agenda was to “understand the enemy.” With regard to internationalism, the grand narrative was relatively simple: West European communist parties were purely “imported” from the Soviet Union, they were completely dependent on the latter, and served its superpower and ideological interests. In a more recent variation of this literature there is a tendency to essentialize the importance of internationalism and, with it, the more static and monolithic elements of communist ideology in the overall identity of West European communism. Internationalism is viewed as the main reason why these parties were supposedly fundamentally different from other political groups in Europe.³ Such an approach has tended to overlook the important variations between cases and the contingency of communist ideology and identity.

Next to this, research on West European communism in Western Europe was, up to the mid-1960s, carried out to an important extent by communists themselves or by their sympathizers. These authors always attempted to convince the reader of the autonomy of West European communist parties vis-à-vis the communist world and the Soviet Union. Issues such as the financial dependency of these parties on the Soviet Union were not dealt with. The analytical status of the Cold War is, in these accounts, not merely that of a relevant context. Rather, the Cold War is the prime and often sole explanatory prism through which to understand communist party behavior. Reproducing the analysis of the “international balance of forces” made by these parties themselves, the alliance with the Soviet Union and the communist world was justified on behalf of the dependence of Western Europe on the United States in the bipolar world constellation. It should be noted, however, that the situation was rather different in France compared to Italy. In France, the communist party in the 1950s and 1960s strictly controlled the writing of an official party history, which was highly apologetic. In Italy, a more open intellectual climate inside the party led to a situation in which party leaders and intellectuals wrote somewhat critical party histories.⁴ A “semi-critical” strand of literature was created, which developed an internal critique of the party, that is to say, it criticized the party within the framework of the basic premises of its overall strategy.⁵

From the mid-1960s onwards, in the spirit of *détente*, an increasing number of scholars who were neither communist nor anti-communist started to show an interest in communism. These were often either people adhering

to the various strands of the new Left, or former party members who had left the communist parties after the crisis of 1956.⁶ In terms of factual information, these writers, often former members, were very well informed on issues couched in secrecy, such as Soviet funding.⁷ Many of these works are still highly useful, also for reasons of interpretation: despite a certain bitterness which characterizes some of these accounts, these authors often display a refined understanding of the inner workings and the identities of the parties. In France, the 1960s marked the start of the study of communism as an academic topic, and the development of specific conceptual and methodological tools, notably in the works of A. Kriegel. In a sociological-anthropological approach, Kriegel conceptualized French communism as a counter-culture and a counter-society.⁸ The approach focused on the domestic implant of the party but by no means avoided the question of internationalism, instead attempting to understand it in a more critical way. The classic “party historiography” in France was hereby fundamentally challenged, in a way the Italian literature never was during the Cold War.

The (massive) literature produced on Eurocommunism during the 1970s and 1980s, mostly by British and American political scientists and historians, brought the old question of national and international belonging to the centre of attention again.⁹ The first propositions for a complex understanding of the interaction between national and international belonging were introduced here, notably by D. Blackmer. Blackmer has conceived of communist party strategy as conditioned by three “permanent interests,” none of which, in his view, and at least in the case of the PCI, has had structural priority over the others: the development of the party and its influence over other organizations; the search for political and social alliances; and the preservation of a close link with the Soviet Union and the world communist movement.¹⁰ There was, however, in a context in which the larger West European communist parties seemed close to government participation, a tendency to downplay the impact of internationalism. Many of these works emphasized the autonomy of the West European communist parties, and of the PCI in particular, with regard to the communist world.¹¹ However, at times a simplistic picture of the contrast between the “democratic” Italian and Spanish communist parties and the “Stalinist” French Communist Party impeded a more subtle analysis of contexts and factors.¹² Furthermore, these works drew attention back to the Cold War and détente as a context. However, the problem here was that the overall interpretation of the impact of the Cold War and the shift to détente was reductive: détente was

nearly always understood as having only positive effects on the domestic and strategic position of the communist parties of Western Europe.¹³ The present study critically engages with this widespread, and so far virtually unchallenged, thesis.

The fall of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, which led to the release of sizeable archive funds in the early 1990s, especially in Moscow, once more brought internationalism to the centre of attention in communist party history. Mirroring the sympathetic research that had been carried out solely on the basis of the archives of the West European communist parties, a strand of literature now emerged, based exclusively on archives from Moscow and the East European capitals. This led to disruptions especially in Italy, where the more or less hegemonic position of the “critical-sympathetic” literature was now, for the first time, seriously challenged. Political and historiographic myths were being deconstructed at a rapid rate. In the midst of a political situation that was undergoing historical changes, not least the break-up of the PCI itself, a *Historikerstreit* developed on such issues as Stalin’s involvement in the strategy of the “Italian road to socialism” at the outcome of the Second World War.¹⁴ Both in Italy and France some of the older controversies, such as the question of totalitarianism, emerged once more.¹⁵

New ways of understanding the interaction between domestic and international belonging were proposed in the 1990s, notably in the concepts developed by S. Courtois and M. Lazar in France. Courtois and Lazar introduced a distinction between the “societal dimension” and the “teleological dimension” in communist identity. The teleological dimension refers to Marxist-Leninist ideology in its Soviet definition, and those elements that were considered necessary for the development of the ultimate goal—world socialism. These were the concepts of the vanguard communist party and democratic centralism, the development of “orthodox” prescribed strategies and tactics, proletarian internationalism, and being part of a global strategy in which the USSR played the major role. The societal dimension includes those characteristics of the communist party by which it was part of a national context: implant in society in terms of adherents and voters; implant in organizations such as trade unions; intellectual influence; the culture and sociology of the working class, the peasants and intellectuals; its relations with other political forces; its being part of the ideological traditions of the Left; its being embedded in national political culture, national consciousness and national history.¹⁶

The new approaches to Cold War history that are emerging in the international literature today combine evidence from newly released archive collections with conceptual and theoretical innovations. These approaches make it possible to respond to some of the earlier shortcomings of communist party historiography. The Italian literature dealing with the PCI in the 1940s and 1950s has made ample use of new Cold War scholarship—the French literature less so.¹⁷ However, for the period of the 1960s and 1970s, communist party historiography has so far failed fully to draw on and engage with the new interpretations in Cold War history, with the exception of a number of recent Italian publications on the PCI.¹⁸ One such new interpretation regards the nature of détente and its global, European and domestic implications: a recent strand of “new détente history” can be identified, which understands détente as a contradictory process involving domestic, regional and international political, economic and cultural actors, with very different and sometimes contrasting motivations, rather than a process simply leading to the relaxation of East–West tension.¹⁹ The present study aims to bring West European communism into close connection with the new détente history, and to demonstrate that the nature of (European) détente in the 1960s and 1970s can be clarified by studying the position of West European communism within it.

1.2. *West European communism and the Czechoslovak crisis in the literature*

An encompassing, archive-based monograph on the impact of the Czechoslovak crisis exists for neither the PCI nor the PCF. At the same time, works dealing with the post-World War two history of these parties invariably give broad attention to it and propose interpretations of its impact. Very different, sometimes contradictory, interpretations have been offered in this regard. Moreover, there is a tendency to look at the effects of the crisis either on the domestic development of these parties or on their relations with the socialist regimes, rather than at the interaction between these spheres. A brief discussion of the “coverage” of the Czechoslovak crisis in PCI and PCF historiography is presented here, and it will lead me to identify preliminarily a number of research questions.

As far as the PCI is concerned, some of the recent literature has proposed interesting interpretations of the significance of the Czechoslovak crisis. However, apart from not being based on primary sources in a systematic way, these interpretations tend to focus on either the domestic–internal

dimension or the international dimension. For example, the interpretations proposed by G. Gozzini and R. Martinelli,²⁰ M. Flores and N. Gallerano,²¹ and G. Amyot,²² have analyzed the Czechoslovak crisis primarily in the context of intra-leadership battles over domestic strategy and in the context of the domestic socio-political developments of the time, in particular the Hot Autumn of 1969. On the other hand, the interpretations by D. Sassoon,²³ J.B. Urban,²⁴ as well as much of the “Eurocommunist” literature, have primarily framed the Czechoslovak crisis in the international context (the Cold War and détente) and the PCI’s international strategy, the “overcoming of the military blocs.” The choice of context partly explains why such different views exist as to the question of continuity and change. Generally, those studies that have focused on the intra-party and domestic dimensions have not understood the Czechoslovak crisis as a moment of major rift, or much less so than, for example, Togliatti’s death in 1964 or the initiation of the “historic compromise” strategy in 1973. On the other hand, the studies that have emphasized the international dimension have understood the changes in the party’s internationalism after 1968 as a moment of rift in its relations with the communist world, and have drawn wider conclusions from this. Recently, the thesis of the PCI’s shift in 1968–1969 towards more autonomy from the Soviet Union in strategic terms has been re-affirmed. This interpretation goes hand in hand with the view on détente as solely beneficial to the PCI’s domestic position and strategy, and as permitting the party to keep a distance from the Soviet-led communist world. The maintaining of the links with the Soviet Union and the world communist movement after 1968 is understood largely as the result of the PCI’s calculations that an alliance with the former was needed to ensure the European (and global) tendency towards détente.²⁵ It is this interpretation that, in the case of the PCI specifically, will be challenged here.²⁶

The Czechoslovak crisis has been an extremely sensitive matter for the PCF, particularly for reasons of subsequent party-political developments—the Garaudy case, the controversy surrounding the so-called “Kanaapa notes,” and the fact that the party was accused of compliance in the post-invasion repression in Czechoslovakia. Encompassing interpretations of the Czechoslovak crisis in the longer-term history of the PCF are less well developed than in the case of the PCI. Many accounts emphasize the lack of impact of the Czechoslovak crisis on the PCF, either in terms of internationalism or domestic strategy.²⁷ The argument presented here is that limited change in the party’s internationalism did occur, although it

was far less significant than in the case of the PCI and cannot be categorized as a shift towards either “less” or “more” internationalism. Rather, changes should be understood in terms of the party’s identity structure, its domestic sources of legitimation, and the challenge posed by d  tente. Scholars of the PCF have faced the difficult task of rationalizing the party’s twists and turns during 1968: from its active campaign against military action in Czechoslovakia in the months leading up to the invasion and its dissent against the actual invasion, to its far-reaching reconciliation with and subordination to the Soviet Union and the communist world in the months following the invasion. Changes in the leadership in 1969–1971 are, in most interpretations, offered as the (obvious) explanations for the party’s erratic course. Although this, as will become clear, was an important matter, the aim here is to look for deeper-lying causes that can shed light on some of the longer-term characteristics of the party’s internationalism as well as its relation to the nation.

Alongside this, there exists in the French case a creative strand of literature outside classic party historiography, covering the Left as a whole, communist intellectuals, or “bilateral” relations with the Czechoslovak Communist Party. Two of these are of particular interest here: K. Barto  ek’s *Les Aveux des archives*, and P. Gr  mion’s *Paris–Prague*. The former work, which has aroused considerable polemics in France, remains a major contribution to the study of the PCF, mainly for the richness of its data that Barto  ek bases on inquiries into the archives of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, on personal recollections and documents.²⁸ Gr  mion has written a highly useful monograph on the intellectual and ideological impact of events in Czechoslovakia between 1968 and 1978 on the French Left in general.²⁹ This work has the benefit of looking at the various segments on the French Left and at the relations between them, and of linking the reception of the events in Czechoslovakia to broader ideological, intellectual and sociological developments on the French Left. The present study draws on some of Gr  mion’s insights regarding the “intellectual gaps and misunderstandings” between the French Left and the events in Czechoslovakia.³⁰

Some relatively recent overviews of PCF post-World War Two history, such as those by D. Bell and B. Criddle, and M. Lazar and S. Courtois, provide ways of understanding the Czechoslovak crisis in the longer-term history of the party.³¹ However, in my view they do not provide an encompassing argument on the impact of this crisis on the longer-term history of the party, in terms of either domestic strategy or internationalism.

Recently, two political biographies have been published of protagonists of the 1968–1969 crisis—J. Vigreux’s *Waldeck Rochet* and G. Streiff’s *Kanapa*.³² The latter work in particular, based on previously inaccessible archival funds and testimonies by key actors of the period, is highly useful on a factual level. Generally, these works reveal the shortcomings noted above: the emphasis is on the leadership factor and on the scandals and “affairs” in the aftermath of the Czechoslovak crisis, rather than on the more profound shifts in internationalism.

2. THE CONCEPTS AND THE METHOD

2.1. *Understanding internationalism*

Many of the differences between the approaches to communist party history can be traced back to the question of whether these parties should be studied as any other political party or movement in the context of pluralist party systems, or if they are fundamentally different and require a very specific approach. The study of internationalism needs to deal with this dilemma in a specific way, as their attachment to the Soviet Union precisely has been observed as a characteristic distinguishing them from all other political forces in a democratic and pluralist setting. In this study, the internationalism of the PCI and PCF will be understood as a matter of deepest and *inescapable* identity, which has profound and strong roots in the histories of these parties and in the mental and cultural structures of their militants and leaders. However, the fact that internationalism is, in a general sense, a matter of identity does not as such explain the concrete features of these parties’ internationalism. A conceptual framework needs to be developed which permits us to grasp the specific quality of these parties’ internationalism, and to identify the factors that shape it.

Historically, internationalism as a doctrine and a discourse has had many different faces and has appeared in many different contexts—socialist movements since the late nineteenth century, trade union movements, Third World movements, the new Left...³³ The internationalism which will be studied here is a specific one, embedded in the context of the Soviet-aligned communist world during the Cold War, professed and applied by the communist parties in Western Europe. Since their formation in the 1920s, the communist parties of Western Europe were ideologically and politically linked to the Soviet Union and to what they understood as a

global movement of “the forces of socialism,” the structure and status of which changed over time. The official doctrine underpinning these political and ideological ties was (proletarian) internationalism. The doctrine originated with the publication in 1848, by K. Marx and F. Engels, of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* and its famous slogan: “Workers of all countries, unite!”³⁴ It was argued that, as capitalism and the economic interests of the bourgeoisie transcended national boundaries, the working classes should not fall into the fatal trap of pursuing a national(ist) agenda, but their solidarity and political action should be located at the international level. The workers’ true interests lie with their class rather than with their nation. It is impossible to overestimate the importance to communist thinking in all its varieties, of this insight and of the internationalist principle. Proletarian internationalism was a constitutive doctrine of what was to become the Marxist-Leninist “orthodoxy” of Soviet-aligned communism in the twentieth century.³⁵ Marxist-Leninist ideology, in its Soviet-defined version, consisted of a number of doctrines, among which were three with a more important status: proletarian internationalism, or the underpinning of allegiance between communist parties worldwide; the “dictatorship of the proletariat”, which defined the organization of socialist society and its political system; and “democratic centralism”, which regulated the internal organization and politics of the party.³⁶

On the level of doctrine and discourse, the term (proletarian) internationalism, although introduced by Marx and frequently used by Lenin during the revolutionary period, was not an explicit element of the regular doctrinal arsenal of Soviet theorists and policy makers up to 1953.³⁷ Under Khrushchev it was used somewhat more often, although only marginally to justify the invasion of Hungary in 1956. It was only under Brezhnev, and particularly after the Czechoslovak crisis and with the formulation in late 1968 of what became known in the West as the “Brezhnev Doctrine,” that proletarian internationalism became a *consciously* established element of Soviet communist theory. Internationalism became increasingly important in Soviet theory, until, in 1976, it was defined as “the most important principle of Marxism-Leninism.”³⁸ The present study will illustrate how internationalism only started to be invoked as a theory *after* its self-evident, automatic legitimacy had started to fade.

In practice, the doctrine of proletarian internationalism had, since Lenin, served primarily as a theoretical device for justifying submission to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), and as a justification for the latter's dominance over, and right to interfere in, the communist parties of the world. A relation of power and (political, ideological, material) dependence existed between the Soviet Union on the one hand, and the (East and West) European communist parties on the other, from the 1920s onwards up to the end of Soviet communism. This was the central and continuous element of internationalism, despite the important changes that occurred over time and the differences across cases. The subordination of communist parties worldwide to the Soviet Union was understood in these parties not as a regrettable "deviation" from the doctrine of internationalism. It was instead located at the heart of this doctrine throughout the history of the Soviet-aligned communist world. The fact that internationalism meant—in one way or another and to some extent—the defense of the interests of the Soviet Union as the first socialist state, was not understood as being in contradiction with what we might see as the more genuine significance of internationalism as international solidarity between the working classes.

Soviet-aligned internationalism became a problem for West European communism in the aftermath of the Second World War in a way that had not previously been the case. In 1947–1948, the PCI and PCF shifted rapidly away from involvement in broad anti-fascist alliances and from co-operation with non-communist forces in coalition governments, towards systematic opposition to the domestic and international order in which they operated. This shift was the direct result of pressures coming from the Soviet Union and the communist world, which, in 1947, at the founding meeting of the Cominform, adopted the Zhdanovian vision of a bipolar world.³⁹ In 1949, the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, the communist take-over in Czechoslovakia, and the division of Europe led to a situation in which West European communist parties were excluded from government. From that moment on, the internationalism of West European communist parties was based not only on the fundamental rejection of the liberal-capitalist national systems in which they operated, but also of the international alignment of their countries. In the 1960s and 1970s, the situation was gradually unlocked: while the PCI and PCF continued to be excluded from actual government power, their domestic isolation was partially remedied in social and cultural terms. Terms, the breakdown of systematic anti-communism in the early 1960s made it possible for the PCI and

PCF to exercise power in local government, and to have more visible impacts on national policies through their parliamentary representation.

In organizational terms, internationalism after 1956 was embodied in the so-called world communist movement (WCM). Although it was more abstract and less tangible than the preceding forms of world communist organization such as the Comintern and the Cominform,⁴⁰ the “world communist movement” constituted a reality in the minds of those who were part of it, with concrete rules of behavior and modes of interaction. From the 1960s onwards, the WCM included three groups of communist parties: those in power in the socialist countries; those in opposition or underground in the capitalist world; and, from the 1960s onwards, Marxist-inspired movements of national liberation in the Third World. It also included a number of “non-political” bodies such as the World Peace Council, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, the World Student Union and the World Trade Union Confederation (the latter two had their headquarters in Prague). The term “world communist movement” will be used here in the same way as it was used by the communist parties. However, attention will be focused on the contradictions and shifts in the definition of the term, as reflecting the deeper-lying questions of its doctrinal and strategic boundaries. While the world communist *movement* organized the communist parties of the world and was primarily an ideological organization prescribing “orthodox” doctrine, the communist *bloc* during the Cold War included only the socialist states and referred to the economic, commercial, military and political relations between them. The “movement” was wider and more diverse than the “bloc.” In this study, communist bloc will be used to refer to the system of (Soviet-aligned) socialist states and their institutions, such as the Warsaw Pact (Warsaw Treaty Organisation, WTO) and the Comecon (Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, CMEA).⁴¹ As will become clear, in moments of crisis such as 1968–1969, the Soviet Union understood the movement’s role as providing crucial ideological underpinning and political support to the bloc.

2.2. *Internationalism: a working concept*

Internationalism is understood here as coinciding neither entirely with the discourse and theory of internationalism as used among communists themselves, nor exclusively with the practical policies of communist parties on the international scene. Rather, it focuses on the tension between them.⁴² This concept here proposes a way of escaping some of the dangers

connected to the study of internationalism discussed above, by distinguishing between the identity quality of communism, which can be understood as an imperative and a *void* mental structure (a), and the concrete *substance* of it, consisting of three dimensions (b).

(a) Internationalism in the most basic sense was one element of the core identity of being a communist. In the phrase of A. Kriegel, it was one of the “invariables of communism”.⁴³ The way I understand this is not that internationalism did not vary over time and space, but that adhering to it was one of the essential preconditions for calling oneself a communist. Internationalism as a matter of identity can be described on the basis of certain established theories on the construction of collective identities.⁴⁴ A first condition for the construction of an identity is the mechanism of including and excluding, and the distinction between those who belong and those who do not belong. What is essential is the imagining of, and the belonging to, a community of forces striving towards revolution and socialism, on the national level (the party) as well as on the global level (the “world communist movement”). The Soviet Union assumed a privileged position in this movement. This was so not only because its communist party claimed to bear the heritage of the first communist revolution, of Lenin and of Bolshevism, but also because the Soviet Union was the first socialist *state*. The perceived importance of the Soviet Union as a state in the global battle against capitalism took on a new and greater meaning in the 1960s and 1970s, in the post-colonial order and in the context of the rise of anti-imperialist movements worldwide, as the Soviet Union was understood to constitute the major actor in the global “battle against imperialism.”⁴⁵

Furthermore, internationalism as a matter of identity involved an understanding of time, and a specific relation to the past and to the future. The particular understanding of history, based on historical materialism, implied that a historically inevitable process would lead to the eventual victory of socialism. The Bolshevik revolution of 1917 was considered the first and crucial historical fact in this process. The (observed) existence of socialist regimes in itself proved that the global march towards socialism was underway.⁴⁶ To be a communist meant to be convinced that an evolution towards socialism was *objectively* taking place.⁴⁷ This evolution was at once universal and inevitable, which is why there was a close link between the final goal, the “horizon” or teleology of communism on the one hand,

and internationalism on the other. Internationalism was always invoked to remind communists of the teleology, and the teleology was unthinkable if not as an international project.

Finally, there was a close link between internationalism as an identity, and the unit of action and organization—namely, the communist party. There was, in the minds of the West European communist leaders and militants, a direct line from the growth and the unity of their party, to the ultimate horizon of world socialism. Maintaining party unity made little sense when not backed by a powerful and unified global communist movement. In turn, affirming party identity was very difficult in the absence of a well-defined identity of the communist world. The party as an organization was loaded with messianic significance and directly referred to the ultimate horizon of socialism. In Marxist-Leninist thought, the party represented the vehicle for revolution, the self-conscious agent of history, and the prefiguration of the future socialist society. It was through the development of the party, according to certain rules, that the construction of socialism was already taking place.⁴⁸ To the West European communist parties during the Cold War, who were “in attendance” to socialism in their countries, a specific importance was accorded to the party, as it was the only *locus* of socialism and revolution. This is why, when communist identity was under pressure, as in 1968, the evocation of internationalism went hand in hand with a call for party unity, and “closing-of-the-ranks” mechanisms dominated.

(b) Beyond the general quality of internationalism as a matter of identity, internationalism has corresponded to a variety of realities, although within limits. These varieties of internationalism will be studied here in two ways: firstly, by comparing the PCI and the PCF; and secondly by looking at the historical changes that took place under the influence of the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968–69. The concrete substance and orientation of internationalism, as expressed through the choices made by parties such as the PCI and PCF, can be understood as consisting of three dimensions: belonging to a global *movement*, participating in a global *strategy*, and adhering to a common *doctrine*.⁴⁹ Thus, the nature of the internationalism of the PCI and the PCF will be studied by addressing the following three questions:

1. What was their conception of the global movement to which they belonged, in terms of the boundaries of this movement and in terms of the relations between its members, and how did these parties in practice position themselves in this movement?
2. To what extent and in what ways did these parties consider their domestic strategies to be part of the overall, global strategy of this movement, and how did they envisage their specific role in it?
3. To what extent and in what ways did these parties adhere to the doctrine which was, at least officially, common to this movement, and how did they relate to the socialist regimes as points of reference for the very definition of socialism?

In the Soviet-aligned communist world, each of the three dimensions of internationalism was related to a theory and a principle of operation, which privileged the Soviet Union.⁵⁰ The first dimension was related to a theory of the Soviet Communist Party playing a “leading role” in the communist world movement; this was downplayed from the 1960s onwards into a “privileged position.” The second dimension was related to a theory of the “determining weight” of the Soviet Union as a state in the global struggle against capitalism and imperialism—increasingly important from the 1960s onwards. The third dimension was related to a theory of the model of the Soviet Union as a socialist society and the Bolshevik revolution as a model for revolution, and their supposedly universal value. As will be illustrated below, the socialist regimes, and especially the Soviet Union, remained important points of reference for the definition of socialism despite the development of limited forms of criticism of these regimes by the West European communist parties from the 1960s onwards.

The development of internationalism in the PCF and PCI will be studied here by focusing on these three dimensions, the changes taking place in each of them, and the shifting relations between them. The mechanism at work in moments of crisis such as the invasion of Czechoslovakia can be described as follows. The identity quality urgently came to the surface when all three dimensions of internationalism were challenged and questioned simultaneously. When this happened, the communist parties displayed a strong and acute need to re-affirm this central aspect of their identity, by distinguishing sharply between the included and the excluded, by referring to the teleology, by evoking the shared myths and symbols, and by focusing on the coherence of the organization. At a further stage, internationalism

as a matter of identity was saved by the introduction of changes in one or more of the three dimensions, or in terms of the relations between them. The analysis below will illustrate concretely how these mechanisms operated throughout the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968–1969, and what the longer-term effects were.

2.3. *The comparison: PCI and PCF*

The usefulness of approaching the history of communist parties in a comparative way has often been noted in the literature.⁵¹ Looking at the varieties in communism over space and time permits us to emphasize the context-dependency of communism, as well as to discern some constants. The comparative method here is one which contrasts contexts: the different nature and development of the internationalism of the PCI and the PCF will be compared and explained by contrasting the different contexts in which these parties operated.⁵² There exists a tradition of comparing the Italian and French communist parties, in particular in the Anglo-Saxon and, to a lesser extent, French literature.⁵³ While G. Lavau has referred to the comparison of the PCF and PCI as a “classic exercise for students of politology,” M. Lazar’s *Maisons rouges* was the first encompassing attempt to compare the post-war histories of the PCI and the PCF. Here, the PCI and PCF have been chosen, firstly, for the fact that they were the two largest communist parties operating in pluralist democracies during the Cold War, in terms of adherence figures and votes.⁵⁴ As such, they had an influence on the smaller West European communist parties, and in some respects determined the fate of West European communism as a whole—an issue which will be dealt with at various points in this study. A second reason behind the choice of the cases is their “extreme” character. Among the West European communist parties they often, though certainly not always, held the most extreme positions regarding internationalism. This was the case around 1956, and once more in 1969–1970, in the aftermath of the Czechoslovak crisis. It was not the case, however, around the mid-1960s and in the second half of the 1970s. The patterns of the approaching and the widening of the positions of the PCI and the PCF on various aspects of internationalism runs like a red thread throughout this study.

One aim of this comparison is to problematize the commonplace understanding of the “more internationalist” PCF and the “more domestic” PCI.⁵⁵ Admittedly, it is impossible to deny that the overall historical development of the PCI tended towards taking more distance from the Soviet-

aligned communist world, while the PCF maintained throughout the Cold War a very high degree of loyalty to the world communist movement. Moreover, the years 1968–1969 seem, in the case of the PCI, to have been a crucial step towards further fundamental changes in its internationalism and in distancing itself from the communist world, while in the case of the PCF, the developments of 1968–1969 seem to have led to a far-reaching realignment of the party in the communist world movement and on Soviet terms. These differences will be understood here in qualitative rather than quantitative terms. It is the specific logic of each party's internationalism which will be sought, as well as its coming about in a specific domestic context and the sources of political legitimation on which it could be based.

2.4. *National and international belonging: sources of legitimation*

It can fairly be assumed that, during the Cold War, the ties which West European communist parties maintained with the socialist regimes negatively affected their domestic position. Nonetheless, the history of communism in Western Europe cannot be understood without bearing in mind that, in specific contexts, internationalism and reference to the Soviet Union and to world communism were sources of legitimation on the domestic level. Many sources of legitimation could be considered: the perspective of radically upsetting the socioeconomic order; the communist share in the victory over Nazi Germany and Italian Fascism; an alternative to the dependence of Western Europe on the United States; and so on. The focus here will be on the following three sources of legitimation: revolution, anti-fascism and anti-imperialism. The first two have been identified in the case of the PCI by the Italian historian De Felice.⁵⁶ It seems necessary, for the 1960s and 1970s, the era of decolonization, to grant similar attention to anti-imperialism. The focus on sources of legitimation will not only help to structure the comparative analysis of the PCI and PCF and their domestic settings, it will also serve to identify some longer-term differences between the traditions of the Italian and French Left. Internationalism as a source of legitimation on the domestic level proposed solutions to a number of problems perceived in the political, cultural and socioeconomic order. The communist parties were constantly engaged in political battles with other political actors for the “occupation” and appropriation of these sources of legitimation. These battles mostly involved political formations of the Left, although, as the French case in particular will show, not only those. The sources of legitimation were most powerful when they referred at once to

the domestic and to the international situation of the country. While, generally, revolution was the more important one to the PCF during the period studied here, to the PCI anti-fascism (referring foremost to the domestic situation) and anti-imperialism (referring rather to the international situation) were more significant.

As De Felice has demonstrated, Soviet-aligned internationalism was able, in the aftermath of the Second World War, to become a source of legitimation on the domestic level because of the two major historic successes of the Soviet Union: the Bolshevik October Revolution of 1917 and the allied victory over Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy in 1945. The concept of revolution took on opposite meanings in the two cases studied here. The conception of revolution in the PCF was at once national and international. It was based on the historical perception of a “modern revolutionary cycle,” which had originated in 1789 with the French Revolution, and of which the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution was the most recent incarnation. Also, the revolution of 1848 and the Paris Commune of 1871 were considered part of this historical movement. There were two ways in which 1789 lay at the origins of 1917: as a model and a point of reference for what revolution actually was, and as a moment of rupture in the course of history. In the PCF’s understanding, being a French communist meant continuing this movement and bringing the French revolutionary tradition “back” to France.⁵⁷ With this concept, the PCF made universalist claims: the 1789–1917 link constituted the universal point of reference for revolutions around the globe. This was not only a matter of French perceptions; the Bolsheviks in 1917 also amply referred to the French Revolution and the Paris Commune. The universalist dimension, in its concept of revolution, reflects a more general feature of French national self-understanding as a universal nation. The French nation, had come to think of itself as a universal nation, whose pattern of development bore wider significance for other nations in Europe and the world.⁵⁸

The understanding of the nation and its historical development was characterized on the Italian Left, and in the PCI specifically, by a sense of particularism.⁵⁹ The PCI leadership in the 1960s and 1970s had deeply absorbed some of the views of the communist thinker and co-founder of the PCI in the 1920s, Antonio Gramsci, on national and international revolution. In their interpretation of these views, Italian unification in the second half of the nineteenth century, the *Risorgimento*, was an incomplete or an atypical revolution, which deviated from the “classic” (French) model.⁶⁰ The experience of fascism and the situation at the outcome of the Second

World War only added to the general sense of particularity. Hence, it was not inconceivable that the socialist revolution in Italy would also differ from the existing schemes and models. The possibility of specific types of revolution was fully endorsed by the Italian communists, before it was officially recognized by Soviet doctrine.⁶¹ Hence, while revolution to the PCF was at once a national and a universally valid concept, to the PCI it referred more exclusively to the national level, at least in terms of the pattern of development or the “road” to socialism.

Anti-fascism, although in a very specific way referring to the Italian case, can also be considered as a source of legitimation in the case of the PCF and West European communism as a whole, if viewed in a broad sense: an identity embedded in the traumatic experiences of the Second World War, that is to say the establishment of right-wing dictatorial regimes, foreign occupation, military violence, resistance and a quasi civil war situation. In West European communist discourses after the Second World War, an amalgamation took place between different historical and contemporary types of fascism: Mussolini’s Fascism, the Nazi regime, Francoism, contemporary formations of the far Right, and so on. The creation of a negative identity such as anti-fascism served to identify the main enemy and to outline the possible alliances.⁶² In the Italian case, anti-fascism referred foremost to a national phenomenon, and to a lesser extent to an international one. Not only did it refer to the Italian fascist past, but also to the persistence throughout the Cold War of far-Right political parties.

The PCF also widely used anti-fascist slogans and symbols. However, these referred rather to a European phenomenon and to the struggle on a global level. As we will see, after the Second World War the party had difficulties in constructing a powerful argument on the domestic “fascist danger.” Thus, the “fascist danger” was projected to the outside world. Protection from this danger was needed by the French *people*—in a double meaning, as a nation and as a class.⁶³ Anti-fascism transformed, on the one hand, into anti-German feelings, and to national sovereignty on the other devotion. Thus, internationalism in the PCF case, after the Second World War, was able to grow on patriotic feelings. The tight, although contradictory, link between the PCF’s Soviet-aligned internationalism and its national(ist) character went, to some extent, back to the mid-1930s, when, as the direct result of orders from Moscow, the PCF took on a strongly patriotic discourse and identity and embarked upon the Popular Front strategy. The major role played by the PCF in the resistance after 1941, and the cultiva-

tion of the memory of this after the Second World War, permitted the party to present itself as a genuinely national force.⁶⁴

At the end of the war, the two main political actors, the PCF and General de Gaulle, competed with each other in their identification with the resistance, and hence, in their self-understanding as the genuine defenders of the interests of the nation.⁶⁵ However, while it was at the heart of Gaullist strategy to present the image of a sovereign France, independent from international ties, the PCF, with its strong international ties, represented an anomaly on the French political scene.⁶⁶ In this context it needed to convince the French public that its international alliance served, first of all, *national* interests.

To the PCI, national sovereignty was less important as a source of legitimation. This should be understood in the context of the onset of the Cold War. As De Felice has argued in the Italian case, at the outcome of the Second World War, in the context of a political crisis which was national and moral in character, the political élites, and in particular the two main political actors, the PCI and the Christian Democratic Party (*Democrazia cristiana*, DC), developed at once national and international/ideological bonds of loyalty. These international loyalties left both the PCI and the DC in a position of dependence, and limited Italy's sovereignty as a state.⁶⁷ This led to a situation in which state loyalties were combined with other forms of loyalties.

Anti-imperialism, although of central importance in communist and leftist discourses in the 1960s and 1970s, has received surprisingly little attention in the literature on West European communism. In this period, both the PCI and PCF widely used anti-imperialist slogans. Communist anti-imperialism found its theoretical origins in the definition by Lenin of imperialism as "the supreme stage of capitalism." From the late 1950s onwards, starting with the Suez crisis in 1956 and increasingly so in the 1960s and 1970s, the Soviet-aligned communist world identified with the decolonization and national liberation movements, in an attempt to win these for its cause. The conference of communist parties of the world, held in 1960, provided theoretical underpinning for the anti-imperialist strategy. Supporting "national-democratic states" and "revolutionary-democratic states" in the battles for decolonization was understood as an all-important way to combat global capitalism.⁶⁸ As used by the communist parties of Western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, anti-imperialism was a powerful tool because it referred at once to the Cold War situation of Western Europe,

to the struggles for liberation in the Third World, and to American intervention worldwide. Insofar as it referred to the Third World, both parties identified with the movements of national liberation, although, as will become clear, in the case of the PCF this had been highly problematized by the Algerian war in the late 1950s.

Insofar as it referred to the Cold War situation, anti-imperialism was linked to anti-Americanism. Anti-Americanism was a powerful discourse in Western Europe in the 1960s, for a combination of reasons: Western Europe being part of the American sphere of influence; US global policy and the escalation of the Vietnam War; and the cultural and socio-economic model it represented.⁶⁹ Following the analysis of the global situation at the onset of the Cold War by the Soviet Union and by the Cominform, both the PCI and PCF defined the United States as imperialist.⁷⁰ Despite the distance taken by Gaullist France from the Atlantic alliance in the 1960s, the understanding that France was a country victim to American imperialism was kept alive on the Left throughout the 1960s.⁷¹ As it was tightly connected to the question of sovereignty, the PCF presented itself as the defender of national sovereignty by attacking the country's ties with the Western sphere of alliance. By contrast, in the case of the PCI, anti-Americanism in the 1970s decreased sharply, at least as far as the opinions of the leadership and the official discourses were concerned.⁷² At the same time, imperialism, referring to the Third World, became an increasingly important element of the party's internationalism. The analysis below will demonstrate the connections between these shifts and the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968.

3. THE CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS IN THE LONGER TERM

3.1. *The Czechoslovak crisis in the history of the communist world and the Cold War*

The impact of the Czechoslovak crisis on the world communist movement and on the communist bloc will be looked at here on different levels. Recent analyses in the literature distinguish, firstly, between the short term and the long term; and secondly between the political situation in terms of relations between the socialist states, and the underlying crisis of legitimization and ideology. One widely accepted interpretation is that, in the short term, the invasion of Czechoslovakia largely put an end to the many rup-

tures and cleavages that existed among the socialist states of Europe and the challenges to Soviet hegemony that occurred in that decade. The many political, economic and military conflicts between the European socialist states in the 1960s were “resolved” by restoring a higher degree of Soviet dominance and by forceful “integration,” specifically through the reform and reorganization of the main institutions of the communist bloc, the Warsaw Pact and the Comecon. During the 1960s, resistance from several socialist states had blocked Soviet attempts at domination.

In the longer term, however, the damage that the Czechoslovak crisis inflicted upon communism as an identity, an ideology and a myth system was grave. A profound and lasting crisis of legitimacy of communism was the result, which affected the national communist leaderships domestically as well as the Soviet Union as hegemon of the communist world. As far as the so-called People’s Democracies in Eastern Europe were concerned, the crushing of the Prague Spring put an end to hopes of the possibility of reform communism or “socialism with a human face” inside the Soviet-dominated bloc. This became more evident after 1968 than it had been after the crushing of the Hungarian uprising of 1956, because the Prague Spring defined itself explicitly as a *communist* development: while the communist party leadership played a central role, it at no point explicitly questioned its basic international orientation. The failure of reform communism led to a situation in which the communist leaderships in Eastern Europe had increasing difficulty in constructing a national consensus on the basis of communist ideology or of the myth system.⁷⁴ The East European and Soviet regimes had to cope, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, with permanent forms of domestic dissidence.

The crushing of the Prague Spring and the Soviet-enforced “normalization” of the country after 1968 also helped to undermine the legitimacy of the European communist regimes in a more specific sense. Among the communist leaderships of the people’s democracies, the Czechoslovak Communist Party (CPCS) was the one which, before 1968, could most rightly claim domestic legitimacy. Communism in Czechoslovakia, more so than in other parts of Eastern Europe, had profound domestic roots and had been an important political and intellectual tradition in the interwar period and up to 1945. Although, during the 1950s and 1960s, the “national” tradition in Czechoslovak communism was replaced by complete adherence to the Soviet model and Stalinist rule, and the country was a loyal satellite of the Soviet Union, the CPCS remained more strongly implanted in its own soci-

ety than any other of the communist parties in the people's democracies. The crushing of the Prague Spring and the purging of the CPCPS afterwards thus symbolized the impossibility of connecting Soviet-aligned communist rule to national political and cultural traditions and of presenting it as a legitimate form of domestic rule.⁷⁵ In the same way that the national communist leaderships needed to make use of (the threat of) repression to control their societies, the Soviet Union needed the threat of military invasion to control the communist bloc. It had become painfully clear through the invasion in 1968 that disagreements could arise among socialist regimes and communist parties—a situation which, in theory and in doctrine, was not possible. The invasion of 1968 was the admittance that Soviet-style communism could only rely on military power to enforce discipline and unity.⁷⁶ It also demonstrated that no consensus existed on the concept of socialism and on the limits to acceptable “national variations.” The increased emphasis on the doctrines of proletarian and socialist internationalism after 1968 in Soviet theory noted above can be regarded as illustrative of the acknowledgement that these types of “solidarity” could not be taken for granted but needed to be enforced by the threat of repression.

Although the problem of the legitimation of communism became more urgent after 1968, it found its origins in the de-Stalinization of 1956. The crisis in communist rule after 1956 has been understood, in more than one interpretation, in terms of the disintegration of communism as an ideology, a belief and myth system, and in a shift towards pragmatic power politics.⁷⁷ The disintegration of the myth system started in 1956: the de-Stalinization in 1956 was an attempt to save the myth of 1917 and the Leninist heritage by denouncing and demystifying Stalinism and its excesses.⁷⁸ A similar mechanism of demystification occurred after 1968, as the Brezhnev leadership introduced the term “really existing socialism.” The purpose of this term was to reshape the myth of the Soviet Union to “earthly” dimensions, in order to salvage it.⁷⁹ These mechanisms in the long run undermined the myth quality of the Soviet Union and, indirectly, of the global movement which it led. In the analysis here, 1956 will also be taken as a point of reference: I shall demonstrate how it created a basic problem of communist identity, touching upon all three dimensions of internationalism as introduced above. The Czechoslovak crisis of 1968–1969 directly referred back to it.

The significance of the Czechoslovak crisis on the longer-term development of the Cold War and *détente*, too, needs to be diversified. It has often been noted that the invasion of Czechoslovakia did not significantly disrupt

the process of détente and the improvement of East–West relations.⁸⁰ Recent archive-based analyses tend to underscore the interpretation that the Czechoslovak crisis, while it did not upset East–West détente, *changed* it. Between 1962 and 1968, détente on the European continent involved various state and non-state actors, and led to a rapid multiplication of economic, commercial and cultural ties across the Iron Curtain. The Czechoslovak crisis was, partly, the result of European détente. As we will see below, it was able to come about in a context of multiple cleavages inside the communist bloc and was inspired by pan-European ideas. One important reason why the Prague Spring was crushed was that it threatened to upset the bipolar order in Europe. As the communist takeover in 1948 had contributed to making the division of Europe irreversible, a regime change in Czechoslovakia, at the heart of Europe, threatened once more to destabilize the European order.

After 1968, détente became more similar to a form of traditional balance of power politics, involving the most powerful global actors: the United States, the Soviet Union, and to a lesser extent China and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).⁸¹ The interests of these governments in some ways converged after 1968: in terms of security, trade, the preservation of bloc coherence, and, after the sudden outburst of social and political protests across the world in 1968, the preservation of the domestic order.⁸² The Czechoslovak crisis was one element which contributed to this change by restoring Soviet hegemony over the communist bloc and by demonstrating the acceptance of this by the Western powers. After the Czechoslovak crisis, the communist regimes of Eastern Europe were largely realigned on Soviet terms. While détente before 1968 had challenged communist bloc coherence and Soviet dominance over it, after 1969, through the “normalization” of the communist bloc, the Soviet Union was able to carry out détente largely on its own terms, thereby significantly less disturbed by internal bloc friction than before 1968.⁸³

3.2. *West European communism and the Czechoslovak crisis*

The ideology and sources of legitimation of West European communist parties were deeply affected by the events of 1956, and when they were faced once more with disruptive events in 1968, it were to some extent the same problems and questions which needed to be addressed. In 1956 the PCI and PCF responded by undertaking shifts in their internationalism on specific points and within certain limits. After 1956 these parties abandoned ele-

ments of the myth system common to world communism—although the PCI went much further in this than the PCF. This was the significance of their careful and limited criticism of the Soviet Union and the socialist regimes from the second half of the 1960s onwards. Doing so, they might have “saved,” in the short term, a core of the ideology and those aspects of their sources of legitimation which were not directly connected to world communism. The Czechoslovak crisis occurred at a moment in the histories of these parties when they were engaged in the processes of resetting the dimensions of internationalism and of their sources of legitimation. The PCI, during the 1960s, was undertaking important—although not always explicit—changes in doctrine, which touched not only upon the question of the “road” to socialism but also on the question of the very conception of socialism and revolution. Alongside this it had, since 1956, suggested alternative forms of organization of the communist world movement and was, moreover, engaged in reconsidering the foreign policy dimension of its internationalism, without this bringing it into open conflict with the Soviet Union. The PCF had only started to recover from the profound crisis of identity and legitimacy in which it had found itself in the late 1950s, due not only to the changes in the world communist movement but also to the domestic situation, namely, the return to power of de Gaulle and the Algerian war. While it was largely unwilling to revise “orthodox” doctrine and strategy vis-à-vis the West after 1956, its dissatisfaction with Soviet leadership over the movement and Soviet disregard of its domestic strategy around the mid-1960s brought it into conflict with the Soviet leaders by the mid-1960s.

The Czechoslovak crisis, then, touched upon all three dimensions of internationalism: relations between communist parties (and states), doctrine and the definition of “orthodoxy,” and Soviet strategic priorities in Europe. However, what was new with regard to 1956 was that now the issue of (Soviet and world communist) strategy had become the central one. It was shared by the PCI, PCF and all the Western communist parties. The invasion of Czechoslovakia directly provoked the question of whether *détente*, in the Soviet conception of it, was beneficial to revolution and socialist transformation in the West. *Détente* posed an ambivalent challenge to the West European communist parties. While the *situation* of European *détente*, as it came about in the 1960s and was continued in the 1970s, was largely positive for their domestic situation, this was not necessarily the case for the *Soviet conception* of it. It will be demonstrated here that the invasion of Czechoslovakia made it clear to the West European communist

parties that, in the Soviet conception, détente was not supportive of the transition to socialism in Western Europe. This understanding was formulated differently in both parties and originated from very different domestic situations and strategic conceptions and from very different historical ways of relating to the Soviet strategy of peaceful coexistence. Nonetheless, it led both parties to converge in their critique of the Soviet Union and in their attempts to change modes of operation inside the world communist movement. This strategic problem remained unresolved for both parties up to the end of the Cold War.

Alongside the strategic problem, during the Czechoslovak crisis the PCF experienced a conflict with the world communist movement and the Soviet Union in terms of the organization and the concept of the world communist movement, while the PCI's conflict was in terms of orthodoxy and doctrine. It will be argued that, as a result of this multiple (though partly hidden) conflict with the Soviet Union and the world communist movement, the PCI and, to a lesser extent, the PCF undertook changes in their internationalism. These changes occurred in connection with shifts in their sources of legitimation and within the limits imposed on them by the world communist movement. While these changes created new contradictions, the PCF and, especially, the PCI benefited from these changes in a first phase in terms of domestic legitimation. This explains the relative success of both parties on the domestic level in the first half of the 1970s. Paradoxically, the crisis in which Soviet-aligned communism in Western Europe found itself in the late 1960s—due to both the Czechoslovak crisis and the rise of the new Left and new forms of radicalism—developed into a period of relative success for West European communism as a whole in the 1970s.⁸⁴ The literature dealing with the longer-term development of West European communism and the West European Left generally has not yet found satisfactory explanations for the relative success of Soviet-aligned communism in this phase.⁸⁵ This will be explained here as the result of these parties' ability to maintain, or even expand, their sources of legitimation in connection to the shifts in their internationalism. Furthermore, the conditions of world communism and of détente in the early 1970s did not bring the contradictions in their post-1968 internationalism to the surface in an acute way.

The problem of the impact of the Czechoslovak crisis on the longer-term history of the West European communist parties directly raises the question of Eurocommunism.⁸⁶ The connection between the dissent over the invasion of Czechoslovakia and Eurocommunism nearly ten years later has

often been observed. The widely accepted thesis is that the Czechoslovak crisis caused Eurocommunism, or that it was the start of Eurocommunism.⁸⁷ Indeed, in the light of the interpretation of the longer-term impact of Czechoslovakia on the communist world presented above, the emergence of Eurocommunism reflected the more general crisis of the legitimacy of communist rule which had already surfaced in 1968. It did so because it was made clear that it was only possible for out-of-government communist parties to be openly “heterodox,” because these parties were not subject to the threat of military intervention as a basis of “unity” after 1968, unlike the communist parties in government and the societies subject to them. However, the thesis of the immediate link fails to explain why, if Czechoslovakia was its immediate cause, Eurocommunism did not come about in 1969. It fails to see the importance of the post-1968 process of “realignment,” of which the PCI and PCF were part. Eurocommunism rather reflected the strategic problem which internationalism posed to West European communist parties, and which had already emerged in 1968. A specific set of domestic and international conditions around 1975 brought the strategic conflict with the Soviet Union to the surface once more, but also revealed the limits and the contradictions of the changes that both the PCI and PCF had undertaken after 1968.

4. INTRODUCING THE CONTEXTS

The changes in the internationalism of both parties will be explained as resulting from changes taking place in three interconnected contexts:

1. developments in the so-called “world communist movement”
2. domestic political developments and the interactions between political parties and groups
3. international relations and the development of the Cold War on the European continent

The first context, the world communist movement, has a different status in the analysis than the other two: it set out the limits to possible change in the internationalism of the PCI and the PCF. The analysis of the Czechoslovak crisis clearly demonstrates where these limits lay, and through which mechanisms they were imposed. The two remaining contexts impacted

upon the PCI and PCF by pushing their internationalism in one direction or another, within these limits.

4.1. *The “world communist movement”*

In organizational terms, the world communist movement consisted of a network of formal and informal contacts, maintained through international conferences, exchanges of top party delegations on occasion of national party congresses and ceremonies, study exchanges by middle and lower party ranks, and exchanges of party publications and press. The PCI, the PCF and most of the West European communist parties considered themselves a part of this movement.⁸⁸ The position of the West European communist parties in the world communist movement depended largely, though not solely, on the attitude of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (and to a lesser extent on that of the other ruling East European communist parties) towards them. The Soviet attitude towards these parties was largely a matter of traditions and customs, but also of its geopolitical calculations as a superpower.

A number of general characteristics in the attitudes of the world communist movement and the Soviet Communist Party towards the West European parties can be discerned, despite important variations. These attitudes reflected the importance accorded by the Soviet Union to West European communism. The “general tasks” which were attributed by the world communist movement and the Soviet Union to the West European communist parties constituted the strategic and doctrinal framework within which these parties operated, although they responded to these in differentiated and, in the 1960s, sometimes negative ways.⁸⁹ The specific tasks of the West European “front,” as understood by the Soviet and world communist leaders, were at all times functional to the broader strategic orientations of the communist bloc. These tasks can be identified as:

- in the WCM: to construct “unity” in the movement, to aid Soviet dominance over it and to help it maintain “orthodoxy”; after 1960, to combat the influence of Maoism
- with respect to European strategy: to cause cracks in the Atlantic alliance system and to exert pressure towards the demilitarization of Western Europe, through influencing public opinion and via parliamentary institutions; to propagate the recognition of the post-war German borders and the recognition of the German Democratic Republic (GDR)

- with respect to global strategy: to increase the prestige of the Soviet Union and communism in general; to support its foreign policy; to support (Soviet-aligned) revolutionary movements around the globe, particularly in Vietnam
- domestically: to expand their political influence in state institutions and elsewhere; to create or maintain alliances in which they played a dominant role; to expand their influence over social movements such as the peace movement, and over public opinion in general.

The dependency of the West European communist parties on the Soviet Communist Party and the world communist movement was not only ideological and strategic, there was also a material aspect to it. While the “gold from Moscow” has long remained a mystery, it is now possible to draw a general picture of the dimensions of the financial support given by the Soviet Union. To a lesser extent, other East European communist regimes also materially supported the West European “brother parties.”⁹⁰ Economic links also existed through commercial and financial enterprises.⁹¹ Material support took place furthermore via support to the party press (massive subscriptions by the Soviets to the periodicals of the “brother parties”), and via the trade unions.⁹² The position of the communist parties in the world communist movement, however, was not only determined by the ways in which the dominant actors of this movement related to them, but also by their own vision of their role inside it. This was largely a matter of tradition. As will be discussed in chapters two and three, in this respect, too, the PCI and the PCF represent very different cases.

4.2. *Domestic politics and society*

Domestically, the West European communist parties were in the 1960s above all faced with the visible successes of capitalist modernization. In Italy, the “economic miracle” of the 1950s–1960s rapidly modernized the economy and transformed it from a predominantly agrarian one into a mixed industrial–agrarian economy. Overall national wealth increased rapidly but along very uneven patterns, in geographical as well as in sociological terms. Massive immigration from the poverty-stricken south to the industrialized north of the country occurred, and was one of the causes behind the political radicalization of the workers in the 1960s. In France, the *Trentes glorieuses* were, equally, a period marked by rapid economic growth. Economic modernization went hand in hand with the modernization of the

political and administrative structures, and with the construction of a welfare state through the political economy, taxation and administrative innovation. These phenomena, as well as the rise of meritocracy, posed a threat to peasants as well as to unskilled workers.⁹³ Changes took place in the composition of the working classes: in France more rapidly than in Italy, a stratum of skilled technicians and mid-level managers emerged, which differed from the "old" working class in terms of identity and interests. As, throughout the 1970s, the traditional working class diversified and, in France more clearly than in Italy, its share in the workforce diminished, the communist party needed to expand its implant in groups in society. The PCF's reaction in the 1960s and 1970s to this diversification was characterized by a tension between attempts—at times successful—to incorporate different social strata, and its traditional self-image and culture as a party of industrial workers. The PCI made a more clear-cut choice to broaden its social base and increasingly turned its attention to the middle strata, including small shopkeepers, artisans and intellectuals, especially from the 1970s onwards.⁹⁴

The political elites of both countries, in the period from the late 1950s up to the late 1960s, were faced with the challenge of responding to these rapid economic and social changes, while preserving the post-war political order and avoiding potentially destabilizing radicalization. In France, the Fifth Republic established in 1958 and led by President Charles de Gaulle was a regime characterized by the concentration of power and a reduced role for parliament and for the political opposition. In this context, the parties of the opposition—primarily the communist and socialist parties—were pressured in the 1960s to create alliances. The Algerian war in the late 1950s posed serious problems of ideology, strategy and legitimacy to all parties of the Left, including the PCF. In Italy, the exclusion of the PCI from government led to a situation in which the altering of power was merely theoretical, and the Christian Democratic Party dominated government. The shift to a centre-left government coalition from the early 1960s onwards, which included the socialist party, gave rise to fundamental questions in the PCI as to how far the party should go in integrating into the existing party-political system. While both the PCI and PCF in this phase opted for a domestic strategy characterized by gradualism and reformism, the PCI went much further in coming to terms with pluralism than did the PCF, and, as a result, its concept of socialism underwent more significant changes.

As a result of the dramatic societal changes of the 1950s and 1960s, an unforeseen wave of political radicalization and socio-cultural protest occur-

red in both countries in the late 1960s. The French May '68, which occurred in a very sudden way, seemed at the time a serious threat to the political order. The political radicalization in Italy, although a less abrupt outburst, started earlier, lasted longer, and had deeper-reaching effects on Italian politics and society. The culmination of protest movements that occurred in 1968–1969 in nearly all Western societies, and in some communist ones, will be understood here not only as a chain of domestic processes, but also as a trans-national movement of protest against the existing global order. As far as the West was concerned, the protests of 1968 were first and foremost directed at American hegemony.⁹⁵ The Prague Spring crisis, as we will see below, was, among other things, a protest movement against Soviet dominance. Domestically, the protest movements of 1968 in the West were directed not only against the existing political, socioeconomic and cultural order, but also against what they perceived as the “established opposition” against this order, namely, the political parties of the “old” Left. This included both the “reformist” (socialist and social democratic) and “revolutionary” (Soviet-aligned communist) strands of the traditional Left. The movements of the “new Left” called for a generational renewal of revolutionary potential, that is to say, they were not willing to insert themselves in a tradition which might have been revolutionary once, but which, in their view, was no longer so.⁹⁶

Regarding their relations with other forces on the Left, both the PCI and the PCF were subject, in the 1960s and 1970s, to contradictory pressures. They were torn between the option of reform strategies and alliances with reformist and socialist parties on the one hand, and the challenge coming from new kinds of radicalism. The pressure coming from mainstream politics and from political parties of the reformist Left, in general terms, led the communist parties to present themselves as acceptable government candidates and as democratic parties. In the 1960s, both parties made the fundamental choice for integration into the party-political system.⁹⁷ With regard to internationalism, it led them to minimize the most visible signs of their international alignment. The rise of the new Left and the multiplication of radical leftist groups from the mid-1960s onwards generally had an opposite effect. Despite the differences among these groups they all developed a critique on the Soviet-aligned communist world for no longer being revolutionary and no longer striving towards global socialism. They pressured the communist parties to present themselves as genuinely revolutionary forces. The communist parties felt threatened by these groups in what they

considered as their monopoly on revolutionary politics and on radical criticism of the existing political and socioeconomic order. This questioned their teleology and their project, and led the communist parties, at times, to reaffirm their identity and their distinctiveness.

Moreover, there was an international(ist) dimension to this: groups such as the Maoists and Trotskyites were attacked by the Soviet-aligned communist world and considered “deviant.” The splits that had occurred in the communist world were reproduced on the Italian and French Left. In particular, in the context of the massive protests against American intervention in Vietnam in the second half of the 1960s, a competition existed in West European politics among forces of the Left for the “occupation” of international points of reference which could symbolise the march towards global revolution and global socialism. Invoking the teleology of their project, and, hence, their internationalism, was to the West European communist parties a way to demonstrate their revolutionary character.

4.3. *The Cold War and détente*

Any study on West European communism during the Cold War is a study *on* the Cold War: not only were these parties at the centre of attention at the onset of the Cold War in Europe, their mere existence was a disruption in the bipolar European order. However, the Cold War should not be understood as a static constellation which affected domestic political situations “from above.” Some of the recent literature has attempted to develop a concept of the Cold War that focuses on the interplay between international developments (diplomatic, economic and others), and political, socioeconomic and cultural developments within countries, involving state and non-state actors.⁹⁸ The Cold War is understood here in a very broad sense, namely, as the interplay between, on the one hand, a global constellation of ideological, economic and military competition, and, on the other hand, ideological and political competitions on the national level. Of central importance to the West European communist parties, then, was the way in which the “balance of forces” in Europe interacted with the “domestic cold wars.” It will be illustrated below how the cases of Italy and France in the 1960s present very different, and indeed *opposite*, patterns of interaction in this respect.

The point of departure is that, after the onset of the Cold War in 1947, it was impossible for communist parties in Western Europe to enter government. This resulted from the international constellation and the fact of

Western Europe being part of the Atlantic sphere of influence, but also from the specific domestic political constellations. Although this was the case in Italy as well as France, the circumstances of it varied, as the former country was more strongly dependent in economic, political and military terms on the United States and the Atlantic alliance than the latter.⁹⁹ During the 1960s and 1970s, the Cold War shifted to a situation of *détente* or thaw. While, as noted above, the literature has generally pointed at the positive effects of *détente* on West European communism, it will be argued here that *détente* caused a *strategic impasse* in West European communism. While, during the 1960s, *détente* in the short term helped the West European communist parties to escape their domestic isolation, the Czechoslovak crisis acutely demonstrated the negative implications of *détente* to the strategy of these parties, and the way *détente* developed in the 1970s confirmed this. Since much uncertainty exists in the literature regarding the nature of *détente*, the definition of *détente* in this analysis needs to be clarified. *Détente* is understood here, rather than as a break with the Cold War, as a continuation of it by different means. It was characterized, firstly, by a declared willingness on behalf of both superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, to avoid nuclear conflict on a global scale, and secondly, by the increase of commercial, economic and cultural ties across the East–West divide, particularly in Europe. While the Cuban Missile crisis of 1962 is generally considered as the onset of *détente*, the visible effects of global *détente* in terms of agreements on disarmament occurred mostly after 1968. These were preceded by European *détente*, which was at its peak in 1965–1969. Originating in the Soviet strategy of peaceful coexistence with the West, launched in 1956, European *détente* was provoked by the initiation of *Ostpolitik* by Western Germany and by the rapprochement to the Soviet Union and the socialist regimes by the Gaullist government of France. *Détente* is generally considered to have come to a halt in 1979, with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.¹⁰⁰

During the 1960s, the roles played by Italy and France in European *détente* were radically different. The effect of *détente* on the PCI and the PCF in the short term was, in some senses, opposite. It might be argued that, while the important change that took place in France's strategic position in the East–West conflict in the 1960s dissuaded the PCF from undertaking major changes in its internationalism or identity, the absence of far-reaching change in the case of Italy in this respect pressured the PCI to undertake shifts in its internationalism. The Gaullist rapprochement to the

socialist regimes made it not very useful for the PCF, in terms of electoral benefit or domestic legitimation, to shift away from its pro-Soviet positions. French foreign policy seemed to open up the possibility of causing cracks in the bipolar European constellation, from which the PCF hoped it would benefit, without having dramatically to revise its internationalism. However, the fact that this did not happen caused a crisis in the party's internationalism in the second half of the 1960s, and once again in the second half of the 1970s. In Italy, by contrast, after the breakaway of the socialist party (Partito socialista italiano, PSI) from the PCI and the communist world in 1956, the PCI was domestically isolated in terms of foreign policy positions. This, generally, made it more urgent for the PCI, if it wanted to present itself as a realistic government partner, to shift to less openly pro-Soviet positions. Moreover, the strategic changes in Europe led it to develop new views on Italy's role in Europe and Europe's role in the world.

Before 1968, early d  tente was characterized by disunity inside the two political-military blocs. This, however, changed after 1968. Due to the Czechoslovak crisis, but also to policy shifts by governments in the East and West in reaction to the "global uprising" of 1968, internal bloc unity was largely restored, although this was more strongly the case in the Soviet-dominated communist bloc than in the Western alliance.¹⁰¹ In France, de Gaulle's presidency ended 1969 as the indirect result of the May 1968 events. Under his successors, G. Pompidou and V. Giscard d'Estaing during the 1970s, France did not entirely give up its policy of independence vis-  -vis the Western alliance, but, rather, the sting was taken out of the French challenge to NATO.¹⁰² Although West German *Ostpolitik* continued to cause worries among the other members of the Atlantic alliance, the agreements signed in the early 1970s between West Germany on the one hand and the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland and finally East Germany on the other, largely reassured skeptics on both sides of the Iron Curtain.¹⁰³

A central issue in the debates on d  tente in the West during the 1970s regarded the question of whether it would primarily be carried out "from above," between states, or "from below," involving contacts across the blocs between civil society groups. While, especially in Europe, the necessity of both dimensions was acknowledged, the short-term effects of d  tente in the 1970s were most visible in its "top-down" dimension.¹⁰⁴ The settlement of the German problem in the early 1970s, as well as the signing of the Helsinki agreements in 1975, primarily hinted at the fact that peace

in Europe was achieved through the acceptance, by all powers, of the continued division of the continent. Although, in retrospect, détente in the 1970s also created the conditions in which change “from below” in Eastern Europe could occur, one effect which détente did not have was to bring about radical regime change in Western Europe. It is from this angle that the problems connected to the internationalism of the West European communist parties will be analyzed here.

NOTES

- 1 For reasons of legibility, I will henceforth use “internationalism” rather than “proletarian” or “communist internationalism.” Unless otherwise stated, the term “internationalism” refers in this study always to the internationalism of the Soviet-aligned communist parties.
- 2 Useful discussions of the historiography of West European communist parties can be found in Aga-Rossi, Quagliariello, “Il comunismo in Italia e in France. Per una nuova storia comparata,” in Aga-Rossi, Quagliariello, *L'altra faccia della luna*, pp. 9–28; Saarela, “International and National in the Communist Movement,” pp. 15–42; Anderson, “Communist Party History,” pp. 45–156.
- 3 This is the general approach in, for example: Tiersky, *Ordinary Stalinism*.
- 4 For an example of “internal criticism” see Spriano, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano*. A more recent example in this tradition is Agosti, *Palmiro Togliatti*.
- 5 Aga-Rossi, Quagliariello, “Il comunismo in Italia e in Francia,” pp. 17–19.
- 6 In France, these included A. Kriegel and later P. Robrieux and F. Hincker. In Italy S. Bertelli and A. Tasca.
- 7 Two well-known examples for France are Hincker, *Le Parti communiste au carrefour*; Robrieux, *Histoire intérieure du Parti communiste. Tome 2: 1945–1972*. For Italy see Bertelli, *Il gruppo*.
- 8 The breakthrough work was Kriegel, *Les communistes français. Essai d'ethnographie politique*. For a brief discussion and evaluation of the anthropological approach, see Hastings, “Le communisme saisi par l'anthropologie,” pp. 99–114. Recent interpretations of the anthropological approach, in particular with regard to the parallels between communist ideology and religion, are Lazar, “Communisme et religion,” and Courtois, “De la contre-société à la contre-église.”
- 9 Especially to be noted here are the works of D. Blackmer, S. Tarrow, G. R. Urban, J. Barth Urban, D. Sassoon, H. Timmermann, and K. Devlin.
- 10 Blackmer, “Continuity and Change in Post-war Italian Communism,” pp. 21–24. On the basis of the same model, Kriegel has found that, for the PCF, maintaining links with the communist world had priority over the other two interests. Kriegel, “French Communism and the Fifth Republic.”
- 11 This is the case, for example, in Boggs, Plotke, *The Politics of Eurocommunism*.
- 12 For example, in Lange, Vannicelli, *The Communist Parties of Italy, France, Spain*.

- 13 The positive effects of détente on West European communism have been emphasised, for example, in Blackmer, "Continuity and Change," esp. pp. 59–60; Kriegel, "The International Role of the French Communist Party since World War II," esp. p. 46; and the various contributions in Tokes, *Euro-communism and Détente*.
- 14 See, for example, Aga-Rossi, Zaslavsky, *Togliatti e Stalin*.
- 15 This issue has provoked heated discussions particularly following the publication of Courtois, Werth, Panne, *Le livre noir du communisme*. Various contributions on this topic have been published in "Dossier Communisme, Totalitarisme, Démocratie," *Communisme*, 1998, nrs. 53–54. See also the brief discussion of the limited utility of the concept of totalitarianism applied to Italian communism in Lazar, "A proposito del totalitarismo."
- 16 Courtois, Lazar, *Le Communisme*, introduction. De Felice made an important contribution by introducing the concept of "sources of legitimation" and "double loyalty." See, especially, De Felice, "Doppia lealta' e doppio stato." For more on this see later in this chapter.
- 17 See, for example, Pons, *L'impossibile egemonia*.
- 18 For some important exceptions from the recent literature in Italy see Pons, "L'URSS e il PCI nel sistema della guerra fredda"; Gualtieri, "Il PCI, la DC e il 'vincolo estero': una proposta di periodizzazione."
- 19 See for example: Suri, *Power and protest*.
- 20 Gozzini, Martinelli, *Storia del Partito comunista italiano*, chapter 10.
- 21 Flores, Gallerano, *Sul PCI*, pp. 79–83.
- 22 Amyot, *The Italian Communist Party*, chapters 11–12.
- 23 Sassoon, *The Strategy of the Italian Communist Party*, chapter 11.
- 24 Urban, *Moscow and the Italian Communist Party*, chapter 7.
- 25 Höbel, "Il Pci, il '68 cecoslovaccho e il rapporto col Pcus," pp. 1171–72; Pons, "L'URSS e il PCI nel sistema della guerra fredda," pp. 30–35.
- 26 To complete the overview of the literature, a few memoirs and autobiographical accounts should be mentioned here, for their information on specific aspects of the crisis: Pajetta, *Le crisi che ho vissuto*; Galluzzi, *La svolta*. Furthermore, two biographies of E. Berlinguer provide useful information and insights: Rubbi, *Il mondo di Berlinguer*; Fiori, *Vita di Enrico Berlinguer*.
- 27 Recently, for example, Lazar, *Le communisme*, pp. 40.
- 28 Bartošek, *Les aveux des archives*. The archive findings are reported in an impressionistic rather than systematic way.
- 29 Grémion, *Paris-Prague*.
- 30 Furthermore, a study exists on the immediate responses by the press of the French Left to the invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia: Deli, *De Budapest à Prague*.
- 31 Bell, Criddle, *The French Communist Party*; Courtois, Lazar, *Histoire du PCF*.
- 32 Vigreux, *Waldeck Rochet*, chapter 9; Streiff, *Jean Kanapa*.
- 33 These different forms are most often studied separately. For an attempt to overview and periodise the doctrine of (proletarian) internationalism and its usage, particularly from the trade union perspective, see Vander Linden, "'Proletarian Internationalism': A Long View and Some Speculations." See also

the discussion of the history of the concept, though focusing on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in: "Internationalismus," in Bruner, Conze, Koselleck, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, vol. 3.

34 Marx, Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*.

35 Throughout this work the term "orthodox" will not be used in an analytical sense but to refer to the standard of orthodoxy as defined by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The term "doctrine" will be used when referring specifically to Marxism-Leninism as followed by the West European communist parties, or parts of this doctrine. Ideology, by contrast, will be used in a more general sense, and linked to belief and to identity.

36 While Fejtő has called these the three "myths" of communism, Tiersky has interchangeably used the concepts of dogma, doctrine and myth. Tiersky, *Ordinary Stalinism*, pp. 11–16 and 54–57. Fejtő, *L'héritage de Lénine*, pp. 95ff.

37 For more detail on the use of the term in Soviet theory see Light, *The Soviet Theory of International Relations*, pp. 169–208.

38 Quimet, *The Rise and Fall of the Brezhnev Doctrine*, pp. 66–69.

39 Among the many works on the crucial post-war years, see, for the Italian case, in addition to the works mentioned above, Gualtieri, *Togliatti e la politica estera italiana*. On the PCF see, for example, Buton, *Les lendemains qui déchantent*; Becker, *Le Parti communiste veut-il prendre le pouvoir?*; Kriegel, *Ce que j'ai cru comprendre*.

40 For a detailed discussion of the Comintern and Cominform see Fejtő, *L'héritage de Lénine*.

41 When using "communist world" I refer, in a general way, to both the bloc and the movement aspects. Kriegel identifies the overall "system" as including the "movement" and the "bloc." Kriegel, *Le système communiste mondial*. L. Marcou argues in favour of the term "movement," also when referring to the system of socialist states and the military aspects. Marcou, *Les pieds d'argile*, esp. pp. 11–18.

42 This approach to conceptual history is developed, for example, in Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History*.

43 "Les invariants du communisme," Kriegel, *Les communistes français*, *passim*. There were cases of "national communism," such as Romania in Eastern Europe and the Dutch Communist Party in the West, both in the 1960s. However, the independent course which these parties and regimes, in varying ways and to varying extents, followed, did not interfere with the doctrine of communism as a universal project to which these parties also continued to adhere.

44 In the concept developed by S. N. Eisenstadt, collective identities are constructed through the following elements: a shared self-understanding and the creation of traditions; a myth system, the political order being secondary to the transcendental order; the vision of a common destiny and sense; the incorporation of protest and criticism. Eisenstadt, "Die Konstruktion Nationaler Identitäten in vergleichender Perspektive," pp. 21–38.

45 This is also noted in Pons, "Comunismo, anti-fascismo e doppia lealtà," p. 283.

46 The terms "socialist states" and "socialist regimes" will be used here to refer to

- the regimes of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union; this is for reasons of convenience rather than as a value statement.
- 47 For a similar emphasis on the importance of the historical necessity of communism, see Legvold, "The Soviet Union and West European communism," p. 347.
 - 48 Fejt  , *L'h  ritage de L  nine*, pp. 95–112. Tiersky and others have sought in the principle of party development a privileged factor to explain the changes in communist parties, rather than internationalism or domestic strategy. An example for the PCI case is Cafagna, *C'era una volta*, esp. chapter 5.
 - 49 This three-dimension concept of internationalism is similar to one developed by G. Lavau: Lavau, "L'URSS et eux," pp. 189–201. Lavau has distinguished three dimensions in his analysis of the PCF's relation to the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s: judgement of its domestic regime, judgement of its global policy, and judgement of its history, particularly Stalinism.
 - 50 For more detail on these three theories on the special role of the Soviet Union see Marcou, "La probl  matique d'un rapport difficile: URSS/monde communiste."
 - 51 For example in De Felice, "Doppia lealt   e doppio stato," p. 516.
 - 52 A methodological introduction to this type of comparison can be found, for example, in Haupt, Kocka, "Historischer Vergleich: Methoden, Aufgaben, Probleme. Eine Einleitung," in Haupt, Kocka, *Geschichte und Vergleich*. pp. 9–45.
 - 53 The Italian literature has generally granted less attention to the PCF than vice versa. A rare example is Aga-Rossi, Quagliariello, *L'altra faccia della luna*; dealing with communist-socialist relations: Bartolini, "Per un analisi dei rapporti tra partiti socialisti e comunisti in Italia e Francia," pp. 439–480. As to comparative research in the Anglo-Saxon literature, especially the volume edited by Blackmer and Tarrow, *Communism in Italy and France*, should be noted.
 - 54 For more information on adherence figures and votes, see the appendices.
 - 55 For a critical discussion of this understanding common to much of the literature, see also Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, pp. 17–22.
 - 56 De Felice, "Doppia lealt   e doppio stato," pp. 493–563. See also: De Felice, "Nazione e crisi: le linee di frattura."
 - 57 Similar arguments can be found in Lazar, *Le communisme*, pp. 74–77; Lazar, "The French Communist Party between Nation and Internationalism," pp. 45–46; Hincker, "La lecture de la R  volution fran  aise."
 - 58 See Furet, "La France unie." On the PCF and French political culture see, furthermore: Lazar, "Forte et fragile, immuable et changeante," pp. 215–242.
 - 59 For a similar argument on the comparison of the PCI and PCF conceptions of revolution see Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, pp. 262–268.
 - 60 Brief interpretative discussions of the "rediscovery" of Gramsci in the PCI in the 1950s can be found in Flores, Gallerano, *Sul PCI*, pp. 196–203; and Boggs, *The Impasse of European Communism*, esp. pp. 119–137. Useful discussions of Gramsci, revolution and the Italian state can be found in Bellamy, Schecter, *Gramsci and the Italian State*, pp. 138–163; Buci-Glucksmann, *Gramsci and the State*, pp. 314–324.
 - 61 For a discussion of this see Sassoon, *The Strategy*, pp. 99–100.
 - 62 Kriegel, "Le mythe Stalinien par excellence: L'antifascisme," pp. 217–223.

- 63 As noted by Lazar, in as far as it referred to the memory of France in the Second World War it was also connected to, and to some extent absorbed into, the general workerist culture of the party (*ouvriérisme*). Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, pp. 271–272.
- 64 Lazar, *Le communisme*, pp. 75–77; Fejtő, *The French Communist Party*, p. 9.
- 65 A similar point can be found in Berstein, “IVe République: confrontations et divergences,” pp. 79–96.
- 66 This is also noted in Lazar, *Le communisme*, p. 27.
- 67 De Felice, “Doppia lealtà e doppio stato.” While De Felice might be criticized for invoking “double loyalty” in an attempt to justify the dependence of the PCI on the communist world, the argument that international and ideological loyalties were, in Cold War Italy, a general phenomenon rather than one specific to the PCI, remains valid, especially in comparison with France.
- 68 On anti-imperialism in the world communist movement and in Soviet foreign policy in the 1960s and early 1970s, see, for example, Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence*, pp. 729–731; and Petro, Rubinstein, *Russian Foreign Policy*, pp. 216–218.
- 69 There is disagreement in the literature on the analytical value of the term anti-Americanism. While some use it in a non-problematic but implicitly condemnatory way (for example Hollander, *Anti-Americanism*), others refuse to use it. I use it here in the context of Western Europe during the Cold War to refer to the opposition against the political, economic, and cultural relation of power that existed between the USA and Western Europe. For France, see the various contributions in Lacorne, Rupnik, Toinet, *The Rise and Fall of Anti-Americanism*. For Italy, see, for example (though referring rather to the socioeconomic model than to foreign policy), Nacci, “Contro la civiltà dell’abbondanza,” pp. 239–261.
- 70 In 1948, M. Thorez, then general secretary of the PCF, declared France to be an occupied country. Winock, “The Cold War,” pp. 67–78.
- 71 This is argued in Granjon, “Sartre, Beauvoir, Aron,” p. 123.
- 72 A similar point can be found in Pons, “La formazione della politica internazionale di Berlinguer: Europa, Nato e URSS (1968–1976),” unpublished paper (quoted with kind permission of the author).
- 73 Recent archival studies have emphasized the state of disarray in which the communist bloc and Soviet hegemony found itself during the 1960s. See, for example, Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall*, pp. 60–69. This was earlier emphasized in Rupnik, *L’autre Europe*, pp. 307–320.
- 74 It has often been noted that, while the undermining of domestic resistance in Hungary in 1956 took a few weeks, in Czechoslovakia it took one year, and in Poland, after the imposition of martial law in 1980, it was never destroyed. See, for example, Rupnik, *L’autre Europe*, pp. 313–320.
- 75 On the national roots of communism and the development of this in the 1950s and 1960s, see Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia’s Interrupted Revolution*, chapters 1 and 2.
- 76 Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall*, esp. p. 62.
- 77 Different concepts have been proposed in this respect. Already in the 1960s, R. Loewenthal spoke of the “withering away” of communist ideology (Loewenthal,

- World Communism*). Marcou has spoken of the “secularization” of communism and the dimming of its messianism (Marcou, *Les pieds d’argile*, p.17).
- 78 For a similar view see Reiman, “La rivoluzione d’ottobre.”
- 79 Karpinskij, “Il mito dell’URSS nella cultura occidentale,” in Flores, Gori, *Il mito dell’URSS*, p. 109.
- 80 For example Roberts, *The Soviet Union*, pp. 68–70.
- 81 For a recent view on this, see, especially, Suri, *Power and protest*, chapters 1 and 6. Views on détente after 1968 as a strategy to deal with internal bloc disunity were earlier developed in Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, pp. 57–73; Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, pp. 191–264; Dawisha, “The 1968 Invasion of Czechoslovakia,” p. 24. Détente is considered to be “deflected” by the Czechoslovak crisis in Roberts, *The Soviet Union*, pp. 68–73.
- 82 The argument on détente as a strategy to deal with domestic dissent, in the East as well as in the West, has been emphasised in Suri, *Power and Protest*, passim.
- 83 Garthoff, *Détente and confrontation*, pp. 72–73; Suri, *Power and Protest*, pp. 213–216.
- 84 The PCI’s share of the vote in parliamentary elections grew between 1968 and 1976 from 26.9% to 34.4%; and that of the PCF between 1968 and 1973 from 20.0% to 21.3%. Also, some of the smaller CP’s went through a phase of relative expansion: the Swedish VPK grew from 3.0% to 5.3% between 1968 and 1973, and the Dutch CPN from 3.6% to 4.5% between 1967 and 1972.
- 85 This is implicitly acknowledged, for example, in Sassoon, *100 years of socialism*, pp. 461–468.
- 86 For a useful, though not very recent, bibliography of Eurocommunism, see Nar-kiewicz, *Eurocommunism 1968–1986*.
- 87 The Eurocommunist leaders themselves in the 1970s referred back to the Czechoslovak crisis as a milestone, for example Azcarate, “What is Eurocommunism?” Protagonists and observers of the Prague Spring also made this connection, for example Mlynář, “The ‘Prague Spring’ and Eurocommunism.”
- 88 An exception from the 1960s onwards was the Dutch CPN.
- 89 The interpretation here draws on the different views on this among the socialist states, on which more in chapters 2 and 3. Critical and encompassing discussions of these “tasks” are largely lacking in the literature. The argument here is based partly on an interpretation by R. Legvold. Legvold, “The Soviet Union and West European communism,” pp. 315–329.
- 90 The most complete work so far on financial support by the Soviet Union to the communist parties of the world, based on research in the archives of the former CPSU, is Riva, *Ora di Moscow*. On the financial support to the PCF, see furthermore Montaldo, *Les finances du Pcf*.
- 91 Little is written on this aspect of the relations; an exception is the above-mentioned *Les Aveux des archives* by Bartošek, which draws a picture of the commercial links between the PCF and the Czechoslovak CPCS.
- 92 More detail on the financial and material support to the West European CP’s follows in the chapters below.
- 93 On French society and economy in this period, see, for example, Cerny, “Modernisation and the Fifth Republic,” in Gaffney, *France and Modernisation*, pp. 9–43; furthermore Marwick, *The Sixties*, pp. 256–266.

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- 94 For an overview of the responses by the West European communist parties to the transformation of the workforce, see Lazar, “Les partis communistes d’Europe occidentale,” pp. 30–45. See also the tables on the sociological implant of both parties, in terms of voters as well as adherents, in Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, pp. 395–401.
- 95 This analysis has been proposed by I. Wallerstein. Wallerstein, “1968: revolution in the world-system,” pp. 65–68.
- 96 Wallerstein, “1968: revolution in the world-system,” pp. 68–71.
- 97 Other important elements of this strategy of integration into the political system, which will not directly be dealt with in this study, were: holding executive power in local administrations, and expanding influence in media, academia, press and even the economy. On communists in power at the local level, see various contributions in Blackmer, Tarrow, *Communism in Italy and France*.
- 98 See the brief account of this in Romero, “Indivisibilità della guerra fredda.”
- 99 On Italy, NATO and the US in the early Cold War, see, Romero, “Gli Stati Uniti in Italia: il Piano Marshall e il Patto atlantico,” in: Barbagallo, *Storia dell’Italia repubblicana*, pp. 231–289. On France: Wall, *The United States and the Making of Postwar France*, chapters 1 and 2; Pottier, “La présence américaine en France, 1951–1967.” On both countries: Reynolds, *The Origins of the Cold War in Europe*, in particular: Soutou, “France,” pp. 96–120, and Poggiolini, “Italy,” pp. 121–156.
- 100 This is the periodization proposed by Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, pp. 110–117.
- 101 Suri, *Power and Protest*, pp. 1–6.
- 102 Mélandri, “La France et L’Alliance atlantique,” pp. 519–558.
- 103 Sarotte, *Dealing with the Devil*, esp. pp. 170–177.
- 104 Garton Ash, *In Europe’s Name*, pp. 57–59.

CHAPTER 2.

West European Communism and the Changes of 1956

In the first part of this chapter I will introduce the changes that took place in 1956 in the communist world, while focusing on the problems created in West European communist parties and their immediate responses. In the second part of the chapter I will analyze more closely the domestic development of the PCI and PCF between the late 1950s and the early 1960s. The changes of 1956, in the short term, led the PCI to undertake a number of changes in its internationalism, which were clustered around the concept of polycentrism and the claim for limited forms of communist party autonomy. In the case of the PCF there was strong resistance to change, despite the fact that it was the Soviet Communist Party that had initiated it. As both parties adapted to the new situation in the communist world, they went through a phase of domestic isolation. The PCI responded to this by seeking domestic political integration. In the case of the PCF, the crisis was more profoundly one of domestic legitimation, which led, generally, to immobility.

1. 1956

1.1. *The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*

Stalin's death in 1953 gave way to a power struggle in the Kremlin between L. Beria, V. Molotov, G. Malenkov and N. Khrushchev, from which, by 1955, Khrushchev had emerged as the leader. At the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956, Khrushchev initiated a series of strategic and doctrinal changes. These were, firstly, de-Stalinization and the denouncing of the personality cult; secondly, the strategy of "national roads to socialism"; and thirdly, the strategy of "peaceful coexistence with the capitalist world." While de-Stalinization was foremost a matter of identity, the national roads strategy had the potential of affecting the concept of social-

ism, and peaceful coexistence dramatically changed strategy vis-à-vis the West.

De-Stalinization, by far the most upsetting event of the 20th Congress, was initially cloaked in mystery. Khrushchev's so-called secret speech, "On the Cult of Personality and its Consequences," a violent attack on Stalin, his one-man rule, his crimes against the Soviet peoples and his errors during the Second World War, was read during the Congress, in a closed session, to delegations of some of the world communist parties.¹ Of the West European communist parties only the PCI and PCF were invited to this meeting.² Because the myth of Stalin had fulfilled such a central role in communist identity and the myth system, de-Stalinization created a fundamental problem of identity for all Soviet-aligned communist parties. They were henceforth to have an openly problematic relation to their own history and the history of the movement to which they belonged.³ In the communist world, the critique of the historic, mythical world leader of communism threatened to give way to criticism of the Soviet Communist Party as a whole and of the wider Soviet system and the nature of its political leadership. The question of Stalinism touched upon the status of the CPSU as a leading party, and, ultimately, internationalism.

However, things did not go that far, as resistance was immediately manifested at different levels against the opening up of such deeply reaching debates. To start with, Khrushchev himself circumscribed the limits of the debate by introducing the concept of "personality cult." In this interpretation, the crimes committed during the Stalinist era were considered to have been due solely to the exaggerated cultivation of one omnipotent leader. The phenomenon was disconnected from the wider political, ideological and societal contexts in which it had occurred. Accordingly, de-Stalinization as a remedy needed to do nothing more than put a halt to the personality cult. De-Stalinization was intended to isolate Stalinism from Leninism, in order to save the latter.⁴ Also, in the wider communist world strong resistance existed to the debate on Stalinism as well as to dramatic policy or identity shifts. De-Stalinization not only raised questions regarding Soviet leadership, but regarding the leaders of every communist party who had based their political legitimation to a large extent on the myth of Stalin and the CPSU. In all the East European communist regimes, the death of Stalin in 1953 had provoked political crises, with open power struggles within the parties and revelations regarding past terror. While in Czechoslovakia a series of "de-Stalinizing" political trials eliminated an

entire generation of party leaders,⁵ in Poland former general secretary Gomułka, expelled from the party in 1949, had to be brought back to power. The unleashing of strong oppositional forces was the immediate result of de-Stalinization not only in Poland, but especially in Hungary, as will be discussed below.

The theory of “national roads to socialism” implied the acceptance of different strategies for, and paths towards, socialist revolution for communist parties in different national contexts. As a theory, it had existed already under Lenin and Stalin. In the communist world there had always been a tension between the acceptance of national variations on the one hand, and the privileged status of the Soviet path on the other hand. The national roads strategy had older roots, specifically in Western Europe: the national roads strategy became the official policy for the West European communist parties during the Popular Front era (1934–1939), and later on in the phase of “national unity” at end of the Second World War (1944–1947). After the founding of the Cominform in 1947, and in the context of Cold War doctrinal rigidity, the possibility of “national roads to socialism” was discarded from Soviet texts. In the acceptance of national roads towards socialism Khrushchev was, in the first place, pressured by the fact that different types of socialism existed *de facto* in Eastern Europe, in terms of the political system or the economy. The national roads strategy presupposed a degree of autonomy for communist parties in the communist world and with regard to the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, it was always specified that the flexibility concerned merely the *road* towards socialism, or the revolutionary process or the transition towards socialism. The actual *model* of the socialist and communist society remained in theory unchanged and Soviet socialism continued to have a privileged status.⁶ The largely artificial distinction between the notions of road and model was obviously an effective tool in containing communist party autonomy and diversity.

Although the national roads strategy did not, on a theoretical level, break with previous strategies for the takeover of power, it turned out to be very important to West European communism, leading to (partial) integration into the domestic parliamentary system. It also gave rise to at least a *de facto* questioning of the Soviet and East European paths to socialism, and, at a further stage, of the models for socialism they represented. For the socialist struggle in Western Europe, Soviet doctrine in this period envisaged a non-violent strategy, the “peaceful road to socialism”: the revolu-

tion in the West was conceived as a process or transition rather than a break.⁷ Although the “parliamentary road to socialism” was, in Soviet theory, only one possible variation of the “peaceful road,” it became the preferred program for the West European communist parties.⁸

The overall strategy in the West was referred to in Soviet and West European communist writings as the “general-democratic and anti-monopolistic phase” of the class struggle. Central to this scenario was the creation of a broad “progressive alliance” between communist parties, reformist parties of the Left, and possibly other groups. The communist party should take the initiative for this type of alliance and should at all times assume the “leading role.” The alliance would come to power through a parliamentary majority. Other, non-parliamentary means of gaining power, as for example through the trade unions, the peace movement and other civil society groups, were given less attention in Soviet texts.⁹ The definition of which groups could be considered “progressive forces” was not very clear and remained a matter of relative freedom for the communist parties in the West. According to the Marxist-Leninist vulgate, once the “main enemy” had been identified, allies should be chosen on the basis of their “objectively” having interests counter to those of the main enemy. The main enemy in Western Europe was defined in this phase as “monopolistic capital”: this included the large businesses and, increasingly, multinational firms. One change particularly relevant to West European communism was the possible inclusion of the middle classes in this broad strategy. The interests of these groups, it was argued, tended to go counter to those of monopolistic capital; hence, it was possible to turn them into progressive forces.¹⁰

The third major policy shift introduced at the 20th Congress was the strategy of “peaceful coexistence with the capitalist world.” According to this doctrine, military confrontation between communist and capitalist states should and could be avoided. Economic and ideological competition between both systems should flourish instead, and through these non-violent forms of competition, socialism would naturally demonstrate its superiority. Peaceful coexistence was considered to be an element of the “democratic foundations of international relations.” These democratic foundations included, furthermore, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, the renunciation of force, non-aggression, and non-interference in internal affairs.¹¹ At the root of this change lay the understanding that the issue of global war had undergone a qualitative change since the onset of the nuclear age. Soviet state interests in peaceful coexistence were to do

with concerns for cutting military spending, expanding economic relations beyond the socialist world, and becoming once more a respectable diplomatic player on the international scene. The strategy was furthermore motivated by a new approach to the “German problem”: the wish to obtain the formal recognition of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), in the first place by establishing diplomatic relations with K. Adenauer’s Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Peaceful coexistence was expected to create the right atmosphere to increase trust between East and West, in support of these negotiations.¹²

Peaceful coexistence, like the national roads strategy, went back to Lenin, but Khrushchev’s changes were significant. Peaceful coexistence was now elevated to a cornerstone of Soviet foreign policy and to a theoretical status which neither Lenin nor Stalin had granted it. While Lenin and Stalin had used the term to describe the phases between periods of war with the capitalist world, for Khrushchev, peaceful coexistence could now be envisaged as the permanent structure on which relations with the West should be based. The perceived qualitative change in the conditions of international relations led Khrushchev to no longer consider war with the West as “fatalistically inevitable,” as Lenin had put it. However, peaceful coexistence did not put an end to the class struggle—to the contrary, it was intended as a strategy to make the world safe for socialism and revolution. It was considered the most suitable context in which socialism would come about naturally and in different parts of the world. Nonetheless, it constituted a break with the Zhdanovian view of the global class struggle from a strictly bipolar perspective. Soviet strategy in 1956 moved away from the Zhdanovian paradigm in another way, namely, by shifting its attention to the “global anti-imperialist struggle.” Although fully viewed in terms of the global class struggle, anti-imperialism permitted the blurring of the two camps. Khrushchev introduced the concepts of “zone of peace” and “national-democratic states,” which included de-colonized states in the Third World (also non-Marxist ones), as well as the increasingly important Movement of Non-Aligned States.¹³ Support for “movements of national liberation” was viewed as a privileged field of communist-capitalist competition, although much uncertainty remained regarding support for non-Marxist or non-Soviet-aligned liberation movements. The Soviet Union, from the 1960s onwards, started to expand its influence in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America.¹⁴

1.2. *The invasion of Hungary and the anti-revisionist campaign*

The military invasion of Hungary by the Soviet Union in October–November 1956 painfully revealed the limitations of the ideological permissiveness that was suggested by the “national roads” strategy. It did not cause a break with this strategy, but it marked the limits of it in a sense that was highly disadvantageous for the autonomy of communist parties and states worldwide vis-à-vis Soviet dominance. Both in Hungary and Poland in the autumn of 1956, social and political unrest broke out as a result of the crisis of legitimation in both communist parties. Soviet policy in Hungary in 1956 was a fatal mix of hesitation and repression. Imre Nagy’s “new course,” which included economic reforms and an end to generalized police repression, was initially supported by the Kremlin, but fear of far-reaching change led the Soviet leadership to support Nagy’s removal in 1954.¹⁵

Public frustration regarding the blocking of further reform, combined with sentiments of solidarity with Polish demonstrators, led in October 1956 to the first series of violent demonstrations with radical demands in the streets of Budapest and elsewhere. The Soviet response of installing new leaders—Rákosi, and at a later stage Gerő—only stimulated public discontent. The first Soviet military invasion, on October 23, was relatively small in scope. Resistance from Hungarian civilians as well as parts of the army surprised the invaders. The Soviet–Hungarian “compromise”—a ceasefire and the return to power of Nagy—led the contestants to pressure Nagy into pursuing his new course even further. On 31 October the Hungarian Communist Party renamed itself the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party. Spontaneous mass protest movements accumulated in the streets and anti-Soviet sentiments among them grew stronger. On 1 November, Nagy, alarmed by renewed Soviet troop concentrations, announced that Hungary would leave the Warsaw Pact. The Soviet Union reacted on 4 November by invading Hungary a second time, now massively, with hundreds of tanks and tens of thousands of troops.¹⁶

Significantly, and unlike what happened in Czechoslovakia in 1968, proletarian internationalism was not explicitly invoked by the Soviet leadership to justify the invasion. It was simply not considered necessary to do so: the argument that Hungary was falling into the Western camp and that a “counter-revolution” was underway was considered sufficient justification. While the 1956 crisis in Hungary caused more bloodshed than the Czechoslovak one in 1968 and was in this sense more tragic, the pacification and realignment of the country on Soviet terms came about with less difficulty

in the former case than in the latter. However, unlike what happened in Czechoslovakia twelve years later, the invasion of Hungary did not put an end to reform policies, especially in the economic sphere. While limited political relaxation and an end to the fiercest forms of repression did occur in the late 1950s, the core principles of orthodox doctrine such as the “leading role of the communist party” were at all times observed.¹⁷

The immediate effect of the invasion of Hungary in the communist world was an “anti-revisionist” campaign. It was meant to halt the tendencies towards programmatic flexibility and communist party autonomy, which the 20th CPSU Congress had unleashed. It was announced on the occasion of the first World Conference of Communist Parties held in 1957 in Moscow.¹⁸ The final resolutions identified “revisionism” as the main danger to the communist world.¹⁹ Revisionism here referred not only to Hungary but also to the Yugoslav League of Communists (YLC) and the PCI, both of which had started to express interest in alternative, more pluralistic forms of communist world organization. Although Soviet leadership over the communist world was confirmed in the concluding text, a statement was added on the “complete equality” of all communist parties, under pressure from “autonomist” parties such as the PCI, the YLC and Romania. Equally, the text recognized the possibility of varying national roads to socialism, but affirmed the lasting validity of “general laws” on the road to socialism. Yugoslavia refused to sign the final declaration, which led to yet another condemnation of Tito by the Soviet Union.²⁰

The effects of the 20th Congress and the invasion of Hungary on West European communism were contradictory. The national roads strategy permitted a type of transition to socialism better suited to West European liberal, pluralist democracies. Moreover, peaceful coexistence seemed the necessary international framework inside which communism would no longer be viewed as the enemy to Western Europe. Although in the mid term the West European communist parties, in varying ways and to different extents, did take up the challenge of these strategic changes and found themselves transformed by them, in the short term the reflexes of preserving party identity and unity in response to de-Stalinization prevailed. All communist leaders feared the disruptive effects of de-Stalinization, which led them to close ranks and halt debates in their parties, be it on Stalinism, on domestic strategy or on internationalism. The general picture of the immediate responses by West European communist parties can be held as an indicator of the complexity of the matter. Two groups of parties emer-

ged by the end of 1956. Those parties, of which the leadership between 1953 and 1956 had already initiated some careful changes, now continued this path without too many disruptions. Along with the PCI, this was the case for the Spanish, Portuguese, Swedish, Danish and Belgian parties. There were, on the other hand, parties that opposed any form of change within their own party organization, in terms of their domestic strategy, or in the organization of the communist world. These included the French, British, Austrian, Dutch, Swiss, Finnish and Luxembourgian parties.²¹

Furthermore, the phenomenon of delayed consciousness²² played a role here: the effects of 1956 were only felt at a later stage, as inside the world communist movement and inside these parties mechanisms existed by which questions regarding major changes were tabooed. Hence, the events of 1956 did not affect the basic orientations of the internationalism of these parties in the short term. Indicative of this is the fact that, contrary to what happened in 1968, all the West European communist parties openly supported the Soviet invasion of Hungary. The internationalist orientations of these parties were not immediately affected in 1956, because the leaderships of these parties consciously used internationalism as an element of continuity at a time when continuity was much needed. As far as the effects on the domestic position of these parties are concerned, the events of 1956 were damaging, but not to the extent that might have been expected. There was no clear causal link between the reactions to de-Stalinization and the evolution of the domestic strength of the Western communist parties.²³ Rather, those parties which already had a steady implant, and which disposed of their own, domestic sources of legitimation, were able to limit the damage in terms of voters and adherents.²⁴ This was the case for the PCI, to a lesser extent the PCF, and also the Finnish party. The smaller parties, by contrast, entered an era of decline. Those who left the communist parties in 1956–1957, generally adhered either to reformist socialism, or were later on, in the context of the Sino–Soviet rift, to position themselves to the Left of Soviet-aligned communism and to criticize it for imperialism and the pursuing of state rather than revolutionary and internationalist interests.

2. THE PCI AND PCF IN THE POST-1956 COMMUNIST WORLD

Before examining the responses of the PCI and PCF to the challenge of 1956, a picture will be drawn here of the longer-term characteristics of the positions of these parties in the world communist movement between 1956 and 1968. This constituted the practical framework within which the internationalism of these parties developed after 1956. I will analyze here the main aspects of the power relations that existed between the Soviet Communist Party and the PCI and PCF by listing a number of instruments of control, and by accentuating the different roles played by the two parties in the world communist movement.

2.1. *Instruments of control after 1956*

Khrushchev dissolved the Cominform in 1956. From then on there was no longer a permanent organizational structure of the communist world. This, however, did not mean that the CPSU no longer controlled communist parties worldwide. It had at its disposal a number of instruments and practices that gave it the possibility to influence the policies as well as the internal organization of the West European communist parties. The most important public means of control in the post-Cominform period were the conferences of world (and European) communist parties, and the often long preparation processes preceding them. Throughout these preparations, relations between communist parties were re-bargained and modes of interaction redefined. The texts which were adopted were considered as actualization of Marxist-Leninist doctrine and were supposed to determine these parties' domestic strategy and their own Congress resolutions. Other instruments, by which the observation of official WCM doctrine was checked and enforced, were the regular bilateral meetings between communist parties. These meetings were moments of reassessment of the power relations that existed between these parties. Officially, and according to the communications of these meetings which were always couched in triumphalist *langue de bois*, the intention was to exchange views and experiences. In practice, the meetings were often the occasion to realign communist parties and to exercise intense pressure on them.

Furthermore, communist parties regularly attended each other's national congresses. The attendance of, in particular, a Soviet delegation at a congress of a West European communist party was a matter of prestige. The

behavior and the speeches of the delegations on these occasions were crucial expressions of the “state of affairs” between the parties and in the communist world generally. Furthermore, much of the control in the post-Stalinist era was exercised not so much through visible institutions, but rather through well-established networks of world communist leaders and so-called apparatchiks. The instruments of control were increasingly informal and hidden, which was at the same time the weakness and strength of Soviet dominance over the “brother parties” in the West. At times, the element of secrecy made Soviet interference more efficient because it tied the Western communists to the Soviet Union in a bond of compliance. But the more important evolution after 1956 was towards a weakening of the means of control and a growing autonomy for the Western parties, although this autonomy always remained limited.²⁵

Relations between the leaderships of communist parties were a mix of these private and official spheres. There existed privileged relations between specific parties, as, for example, in the 1960s and 1970s, between the Italian and Yugoslav parties, between the Italian and the Japanese parties, between the French and the Polish parties, and, until 1968, between the French and the Czechoslovak parties.²⁶ Privileged relations also existed between individual leaders across parties: certain leaders of the West European communist parties were allied to certain leaders in the Soviet Union and the East European communist parties. This made the leaderships of the Western parties particularly vulnerable to changes taking place in their East European counterparts. The personal power relations and modes of interaction which ruled inside the world communist élite went back to the Comintern and Cominform networks, but persisted long after 1956. Their force weakened from the mid-1960s onwards, however, when, in most of the West European communist parties, the generation of leaders who had spent the wartime in the Soviet Union (such as Palmiro Togliatti of the PCI and Maurice Thorez of the PCF) was replaced by a younger generation. These younger leaders had never lived in the Soviet Union, nor had they been educated at the “International Leninist School,” as previous generations had.²⁷

In the structures of the Soviet Communist Party, the International Department (ID) was the determining agency concerning policies towards West European, non-ruling communist parties after 1956.²⁸ The ID played a prominent role in the CPSU apparatus and represented the old Bolshevik dream of world revolution. Its long-term leader, B. Ponomarev, a “relic of the Comintern” as Khrushchev is reported to have described him, pos-

sessed enormous prestige in the higher party circles in Moscow. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s he was a key figure in shaping Soviet foreign policy, thus representing the “ideological” dimension in Soviet foreign policy as opposed to the “realist” dimension, which was represented by the Soviet embassies in the West as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow. Hence, in policy towards West European communist parties, control over the observation of orthodox doctrine was a central element. Throughout the 1970s, a double development took place: while the ID became increasingly important, it shifted its attention increasingly to the Third World.²⁹ When West European party delegations met with representatives of the CPSU, they generally faced Ponomarev (if relations were good or if the meeting was particularly important), or his aides (when the Soviet leaders wanted to express their discontent). His most important collaborators throughout the 1960s and 1970s, particularly responsible for Western Europe, were Zagladin and Suslov. The International Department edited the journal *Problems of Peace and Socialism*, the influential theoretical and ideological periodical of the world communist movement, which informed communist parties worldwide of “orthodox” developments in Marxism-Leninism and “the right line.” Its offices were located in Prague and were a microcosm that reproduced the old habits of the communist world and cherished nostalgia for the Comintern times.³⁰ Publications in this review were often a way for Soviet or East European leaders to criticize “deviating” communist parties or to announce changes in the general line. Although its influence diminished in the 1970s, in the 1960s, generally, the journal was still a highly important means of communication and control.

Pressure on the West European communist parties was exerted not only through control and punishment but also through gifts, in the form of genuine carrot-and-stick tactics. The financial and material support originated mostly from the Soviet Union, but to a lesser extent also from other East European regimes. There were different types of financial and material support: regular funding of the parties; funding of affiliated organizations such as the trade unions and the “friendship” organizations; support to the party press organs through a large number of subscriptions; irregular donations; economic support and trade co-operation through the sponsoring of private firms in the West; and regular sponsoring of tourism to the East, specifically for West European communist leaders and militants.³¹

During the Cold War much mystery and speculation surrounded the “gold of Moscow.” This affected the credibility of the West European com-

munist parties domestically.³² Since the opening of archives in the former communist regimes, historians are better informed with respect to the first two types of support. From the 1950s onwards, and throughout the Cold War, non-ruling parties around the world received an annual amount of money from the so-called Assistance Fund. It was managed in Moscow but also contained contributions from other ruling communist parties, although these diminished from the Khrushchev years onwards. The total amount of allowances going to the West European parties in 1956 was \$ 6,000,000, which represented about 90 per cent of the total fund. Of the Western parties, the greatest beneficiary was the PCI, followed by the French and Finnish parties. Although it is difficult to draw clear conclusions regarding the Soviet criteria for the distribution of the allowances, it seems that the domestic strength of the party mattered more than loyalty.³³ While the total figure for Western Europe amounted to \$ 9,000,000 in 1964, during the Brezhnev years the West European share stagnated and the communist parties and liberation movements in Africa, Latin America and Asia benefited somewhat more. As far as support from other East European communist parties is concerned, there is only information on the Czechoslovak CPCS.³⁴ This party supported the PCF and, to a lesser extent, the PCI by means of irregular gifts to the trade unions,³⁵ sponsored holidays, support to the press, and, most importantly, commercial enterprises.³⁶

2.2. The positions and roles of the PCI and PCF

While the theory of proletarian internationalism was, in principle, common to all communists worldwide, in practice the room for maneuver of individual communist parties varied. From the 1920s, both the PCI and PCF had found themselves in a subordinate position towards the Soviet Union, but the conditions of this differed somewhat between the two cases. This was to do with varying attitudes towards these parties by the Soviets, as well as with different responses by the two party leaderships. In the interwar period, Moscow started to consider the PCF as a pillar in its overall European strategy. Under Soviet auspices, Paris became a haven for those communist leaderships operating clandestinely, such as the Italian and the Spanish. By contrast, Moscow was less interested in the Italian Communist Party, which domestically did not play any important political role from 1926 onwards. This created an intellectual climate in which original ideological thinking could develop more freely than in the case of the PCF. While Moscow sent a number of Comintern agents to Paris as “tu-

tors” of the PCF in the 1930s, the PCI was spared this kind of “assistance,” most probably because it was not considered important enough.³⁷

Under Maurice Thorez, the PCF succumbed completely to Soviet orders from the late 1920s onwards. This led the party not to embark upon an electoral agreement with the Socialist Party in 1927, as well as to a large number of expulsions of leaders. Also, the emergence of the Popular Front in 1936 was the direct result of Soviet and Comintern strategies. Nonetheless, the Popular Front experience, followed by the party’s involvement in the Resistance from 1941 onwards, did have the effect of turning the PCF into a mass party with a steady domestic implant. The leader of the PCI, Palmiro Togliatti, had also succumbed to loyalty towards Stalin from the 1920s onwards after a phase of conflict with the CPSU which had led to the expulsion of a number of Italian communist leaders. Moreover, during the 1930s Togliatti was an important leader of the Comintern and as such had an impact on its strategic choices. However, Togliatti, in a more effective way than the French communist leadership, succeeded in reconciling the interests of the communist world with the domestic interests of the PCI. Alongside this, he allowed a higher degree of diversification inside the party leadership, including, to some extent, dissent against the Comintern line. Furthermore, in the theoretical works of Gramsci, in particular the *Prison Notebooks*, a creative and complex application of Marxism to West European societies was developed, which was profoundly to influence PCI politics and culture.³⁸ The experience of underground work throughout the 1930s and the anti-fascist Resistance during the Second World War provided the party with a source of legitimization which was largely national in character.³⁹

The differing Soviet attitudes towards different (West European) communist parties were motivated, during the Cold War, by geo-strategic considerations. When, after 1956, the Soviet Union wished to improve its relations with some of the Western powers, France was more important to Moscow than Italy.⁴⁰ Generally, this was so because France, in this period, was more important in world politics than Italy: after the Second World War, France was still considered as one of the four leading nations in the world and was still a colonial power. From the 1960s onwards it became a nuclear power. Italy, by contrast, was considered by the Soviets at the onset of the Cold War as a defeated nation, greatly dependent on the United States in political and economic terms.

Importantly, both parties traditionally had a differing view on their own

role in the communist world. The French Communist Party had, since the 1920s, considered its role in the communist world as, in the words of A. Kriegel, the “oldest daughter of the communist church.”⁴¹ After 1956, this role was transformed into the (self-assigned) role of the prime defender of “orthodoxy” in the world communist movement, and, after the Sino–Soviet break in the 1960s, of the defender of “unity” or strict cohesiveness. This corresponded to its ideal image of a monolithic organization with a commonly observed doctrine, inside which strategic interests naturally converged. Furthermore, the PCF considered itself to be the most influential communist party in Western Europe, with “special responsibilities” towards smaller communist parties in the West and, later on, towards communist parties of Northern Africa. As far as Western Europe in the 1950s and 1960s was concerned, the Soviet Communist Party delegated the PCF to assume “permanent contacts and the highest responsibility” with regard to the smaller parties—the Belgian, Dutch, Luxembourgian, Swiss, British, Irish and Portuguese parties. The PCI assumed the same responsibilities towards the Austrian and Greek parties.⁴²

3. THE PCI, THE PCF, AND CHANGES IN INTERNATIONALISM, 1956–1962

In the first instance, the PCI and the PCF displayed similar reactions to the shock of the 20th Congress; these were generally marked by reflexes of identity and unity. At a later stage, however, the attitudes of the French and Italian communist leaderships increasingly diverged, and with this, the fate of their parties. In the PCI, the leadership, and Togliatti in particular, initiated a process of resetting internationalism on specific issues. A first step was the questioning of the organization of the communist world. In the PCF, led by Thorez, a similar crisis of identity led to the conservation of its traditional internationalism, in particular regarding doctrine.⁴³ In neither party did de-Stalinization bring about an open debate on Stalinism or on the party’s own history. The de-Stalinization that came about in both cases was an official and limited reassessment of certain elements of the ideology and the identity of the party, and was at all times carefully controlled by the leadership. In both parties, official de-Stalinization was based, in terms of the myth system, on the mechanism of “isolation”: the myth of Stalin was isolated from the remaining myth system of communism in order to save the latter.

The difference between the two parties, however, occurred in the point at which the myth system was disintegrated and how much of it was left intact.

The limitations to change in internationalism became clear from the fact that both parties publicly and fully supported the Soviet invasion of Hungary. There were, however, subtle differences between the PCI and PCF interpretation of the crisis. The PCF not only supported the military invasion, it probably encouraged the Soviets beforehand to invade.⁴⁴ Following the second invasion, *Humanité* adopted a triumphalist tone (“popular power is restored”), categorizing the revolts as “fascist” and reproducing the Soviet thesis of a capitalist conspiracy in Hungary.⁴⁵ For the PCI, by contrast, the first invasion “could and should have been avoided,” while the second invasion had clearly been necessary.⁴⁶ The importance of this difference lay in their understanding of why the invasion was considered necessary. To the PCF, the question of whether the Hungarian communists could have solved the problem alone was of no importance to justify the invasion. The crucial fact in this reading was that the communist world as a whole was endangered by the capitalist infiltration in Hungary. To the PCI, on the other hand, the (second) invasion was only justified because the Hungarian Communist Party—supposedly—could not handle the situation. A similar difference had occurred in the interpretation of the uprising in Poznań in Poland, a month earlier. While the PCF fully aligned with the Soviet reports on capitalist agents operating among the Polish workers, the PCI, together with the Yugoslav and the Chinese parties, accentuated the role of the Polish Communist Party.⁴⁷

3.1. *The PCI: Polycentrism and the “national road”*

In the PCI, de-Stalinization led to a process in which the myth of the Soviet Union, as maintained by the party leadership, became increasingly auto-referential, referring to the PCI and its own history rather than the actual Soviet system or even its history.⁴⁸ The general crisis of identity and disunity inside the party was partly overcome by introducing concrete, more or less manageable changes in internationalism.⁴⁹ These involved, in the first instance, a critique of the organization of the communist world, and, further, critical reflection on the orthodox “roads” to socialism, and thus implicitly on the model and concept of socialism and WCM orthodoxy. While this left many questions unanswered as to the meaning of revolution and its function as a source of domestic legitimation, the PCI throughout this period, and especially after 1960, benefited from the omnipresence of the theme of anti-fascism.

3.1.1. *The organizational critique: Polycentrism*

Togliatti's initial reaction was to taboo de-Stalinization. Immediately following the 20th Congress, Togliatti informed the limited Secretariat, but not the wider Direzione, of the existence of Khrushchev's Secret Speech. At the Central Committee meeting of 13 March, Togliatti discussed peaceful coexistence and the national roads strategy in a positive way, but did not mention de-Stalinization.⁵⁰ However, Togliatti soon undertook a dramatic shift, which introduced a new era in the party's internationalism. Togliatti was more widely challenged by his immediate collaborators than PCF leader Thorez, and was more responsive to it. At the Direzione meetings of 15 and 29 March, several leaders, including U. Terracini, P. Ingrao, G.C. Pajetta and G. Amendola, pressured Togliatti to link de-Stalinization to wider theoretical issues. Togliatti's famous interview "Nine questions on the 20th Congress of the CPSU" with the (non-communist) journal *Nuovi argomenti* in June 1956 outlined the official party response to de-Stalinization.⁵¹ It was a way to initiate, but also to circumscribe, the debate on Stalinism. In the interview, the Italian communist leader urged the Soviets not to limit their analysis of Stalinism to the denunciation of the personality cult. Instead, he argued for a more genuinely Marxist investigation of the more structural causes behind the phenomena of the "progressive superposition of personal power" and the "accumulation of bureaucratization, violations of legality, stagnation and degeneration." The criticism of the Soviet leaders had a clear function: it allowed the PCI to legitimize its claim to autonomy vis- -vis the Soviet Union. This, in turn, served a more flexible development of the "Italian road to socialism." Communist party autonomy was never, in Togliatti's conception, an absolute principle for its own sake, but always instrumental to a freer development of domestic strategy on the one hand, and to a more democratic and more effective organization of the communist world on the other.⁵²

Next to arguing for more autonomy for communist parties in terms of domestic strategy, Togliatti envisaged a new, "polycentric" form of organization of the communist world, that is to say, a regionally based organization of clusters of communist parties and/or states.⁵³ The concept of polycentrism was the central vehicle for change in the party's internationalism in this period in three ways: it reflected on the organization of the communist world, on the concept of socialism, and, from the early 1960s onwards, on the world order. In the initial, minimal interpretation which Togliatti gave to it, polycentrism meant that communist parties with geo-political

affinities should reinforce their links and jointly deliberate their domestic and regional problems and co-ordinate their strategies. Between and inside these regional clusters of communist parties, relations should be egalitarian: there should not be a “guide party” or guide state. This idea broke with Stalinist traditions of international communist organization, as under Stalin any type of bi- or multilateral contacts between communist parties had been banned as “faction forming.”

In the *Nuovi argomenti* interview, the first traces of another, maximalist meaning of polycentrism could be found, which implicitly raised the question of the value of the Soviet model for socialism.⁵⁴ The idea was that there were different paths to socialism and that, as a result, strategy should differ significantly according to the regions of the world. In this maximalist meaning, polycentrism had far-reaching doctrinal implications: there was a specific West European path to socialism, different from the experiences in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe or Asia. Togliatti explicitly traced this line of thought back to Gramsci. This took place in the context of a wider “rediscovery” of Gramsci’s writings in the 1950s by the PCI leadership. The renewed interest in Gramsci around 1956, initiated by the PCI leadership, served two causes: to demonstrate the older roots of the PCI’s critical internationalism, and to contain the disruptive effects of de-Stalinization on identity and doctrine.⁵⁵ Maximalist polycentrism went beyond Khrushchev’s notion of national roads: firstly, while in Khrushchev’s view the national road to socialism was only incidentally allowed by the Soviet Union (as the invasion of Hungary had shown), for Togliatti it should become the norm. However, the concept of polycentrism, in either definition, was never intended as a break with the communist world, its aim only being to change its organization and modes of action.

Polycentrism and autonomy, although often categorized together under the heading of “new internationalism” by the PCI itself at the time as well as in historiography, were in fact two very different things. The idea of a regionally defined path to socialism, in its ultimate implications, went counter to a strict notion of party autonomy. The tension between these concepts was to become clear in the responses from other West European communist parties to the PCI’s attempts to realize polycentrism in the 1960s. The difference between autonomy and (maximalist) polycentrism was reflected in distinct reactions from the Soviet leaders: they perceived polycentrism as more threatening to their dominance over the communist world and to their definition of orthodoxy.⁵⁶ Even before the anti-revision-

ist campaign of 1957, there was direct pressure on the PCI leadership: at a meeting held in Moscow in June 1956, Molotov made it clear to Direzione member Pajetta that the Soviets would never accept the type of analysis Togliatti made of the Soviet system in the *Nuovi argomenti* interview, nor the strategic and doctrinal implications of polycentrism.⁵⁷ As a result, Togliatti moderated his views and saved what was minimally needed to preserve the “Italian road.” Firstly, this implied watering down his fiercest criticism of the Soviet system (“degeneration”) and once more reaffirming the superior character of the Soviet Union. Secondly, he shifted to advocating simple party autonomy instead of maximalist polycentrism.⁵⁸

Although the term was dropped until 1961, the PCI took a series of initiatives with an implicit polycentric character, which were at the time still banned in WCM custom. These announced the emerging of a cluster of West European communist parties. In late March 1956, a secret meeting took place in Rome between Thorez and Togliatti, requested by the latter.⁵⁹ Another secret meeting between a PCI and a PCF delegation was organized in May of the same year in San Remo. The PCI proposed here the establishment of “privileged relations” between the two parties, the creation of a joint journal, and the exchange of permanent representatives. The significance of these initiatives, however, was limited. It became amply clear that the two parties disagreed on all the important issues concerning the organization of the world communist movement, on the interpretation of Stalinism, and on Khrushchev’s innovations. At the next meeting in Paris in July 1956, no agreement was reached on any of the earlier proposals, apart from the exchange of representatives. With regard to polycentrism, a major point of disagreement between the two parties was the Italian proposal to extend their contacts to other communist parties of Western Europe, and even other non-communist groups on the Left. This the French communists refused.⁶⁰ However, the PCI’s commitment to these projects was also, ultimately, limited: as doctrinal disagreements between the two parties proved very important, it did not wish to be constrained in its innovations by close collaboration with the PCF.⁶¹

From the outset, Western Europe was not the only geographical entity in Togliatti’s ideas on regional communism—the Mediterranean was another. Togliatti’s meeting with Tito in Belgrade in late May 1956 probably influenced his thinking in this respect. Although Tito did not use the term, his conception of the non-aligned movement had an affinity with Togliatti’s new ideas. After more than ten years of fierce hostility between the two

parties, formal relations were resumed in 1956 and regular meetings took place throughout the 1960s, despite the anti-Yugoslav campaigns in the WCM.⁶²

3.1.2. *The “national road” and domestic integration*

Along with a new conception of the world communist movement, the claims to autonomy were intended to make possible a freer elaboration of the “Italian road to socialism.” The PCI leadership in 1956 perceived the need, as well the occasion, to change the bases of its domestic strategy. The occasion was provided by the theoretical acceptance of nationally differing strategies—although Hungary had demonstrated the limits of this in practice. The need for a change in domestic strategy followed from the rapid changes that had occurred in Italian society and its economy, and, politically, from the party’s acute isolation after 1956. Italian society and economy in the 1950s and 1960s underwent a dramatic transformation. The Italian *miracolo economico* in the first instance seemed to give proof of the successes of capitalism: economic modernization and rapid industrialization. This went hand in hand with an accelerated change in society: the growth of the tertiary sector, the emergence of mass consumption, the rise of the middle classes, especially in the northern and central parts of the country, and the democratization of education.

The effects of all this, however, were disruptive in many ways and led to new forms of inequality and exclusion, as well as the break-up of agrarian societies and the rapid emergence of large urban centers. Most importantly, the unequal development of the North and the South was accentuated and gave rise to massive internal and external migration.⁶³ In this context, the challenge was to propose a workable alternative for classic *laissez-faire* government policies, and to represent diversified groups in society.

Following the invasion of Hungary, the Socialist Party (Partito socialista italiano, PSI) underwent a strategic shift, taking a critical distance from the Soviet Union and from the PCI and shifting its attention to the political centre and the Christian Democratic Party. Before 1956, the PSI, only half as important as the PCI in terms of electoral support, had found itself in a subordinate position towards the latter. Internationally, it had been sympathetic to the communist world.⁶⁴ Its break with communism in 1956 marked the beginning of a steady alienation between the two parties, in terms of ideology and program, and in terms of international alignment. The Socialist Party shifted to a more positive, albeit still conditional, appreciation of the

European Economic Communities (EEC). Next to this, the Italian government played an active role in re-launching NATO and reinforcing cohesion inside it after the Suez crisis of 1956.⁶⁵ The enduring dependence of Italy on the Western bloc and the United States, and the foreign policy positions of the main political parties, created a situation in which the PCI was isolated in terms of foreign policy orientations, more sharply than before 1956.

In such circumstances, the PCI's domestic program needed to be a factor of integration. The development of a nationally adapted strategy was facilitated by the party's traditions of a relatively independent line, especially the experience of anti-fascist resistance, and the *via italiana* strategy in the post-war period. However, 1956 was a moment of break also in this respect. The careful relativization of the Soviet model of socialism in 1956 created the possibility to reflect upon the "Italian road" in a freer way. Although this was not said openly at this stage, the Soviet Union ceased to have the value of a model of socialism for the PCI in 1956.⁶⁶ In the *Nuovi argomenti* interview, Togliatti, in a most non-orthodox way, argued that certain countries might develop socialism without the communist party taking the lead in the process.⁶⁷ Given the centrality of the doctrine of the "leading role of the communist party" in Soviet theory and practice, this was the implicit denial of the universal value of the Soviet model and its orthodoxy. It was, however, a relative critique of the Soviet political system and society: it did not imply more than the idea that the Soviet model may not be suited to Italy. This was not an absolute criticism of the Soviet Union: there was no critical analysis of the Soviet model for reasons of principle, or connected to a universal definition of socialism.

The new thinking on the road to socialism in Italy found its first expression after 1956 in the development of updated, more sophisticated if not yet heterodox, analyses of Italian capitalism. A crucial impulse in this respect came from the communist-dominated trade union the CGIL (Confederazione generale italiano del lavoro), whose leaders in the mid-1950s initiated a self-critical reflection on general strategy. The trade union leadership developed innovative analyses regarding, for example, the modernizing aspects of Italian capitalism and the uneven development of the North and South.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the party's study centre, the Istituto Gramsci, with its regular conferences and publications, pressured the party leaders into more doctrinal and theoretical flexibility. New analyses were developed, for example, on the technological revolution and on monopolies. In the central leadership these ideas influenced, in particular, Direzione member

G. Amendola, who, in around 1960, started thinking in terms of the generally positive effects, on the working classes also, of the so-called economic miracle.⁶⁹ On the other hand, the limits to this innovative thinking should be noted. For example, at the same time Togliatti still defended the “relative impoverishment” of the Italian workers in contrast to the accumulation of wealth by the higher classes.⁷⁰

3.2. *The PCF: the defense of orthodoxy and the crisis of legitimation*

While the PCI leadership shifted from initial attempts to contain the disruptive effects of de-Stalinization towards constructive change within the new paradigm, the PCF moved from initially *opposing* Khrushchev’s innovations to being immobilized by them. In terms of the organization of the communist world, as well as in terms of doctrine and strategy, the party was, in this phase, the staunchest opponent to changes that it intuited were not “orthodox.” Its traditional obedience, however, led it to shift to complete alignment with Khrushchev. A crisis of domestic legitimation at the end of the 1950s, which was much more profound than in the case of the PCI, and the threat of loss of unity and identity, led it to emphasize continuities in terms of doctrine and international alignment.

3.2.1. *Khrushchevism or orthodoxy?*

The PCF leadership did not discuss the Secret Speech until a Bureau politique (BP) meeting in early March. The Central Committee meeting of 22 March only cautiously hinted at the issue of Stalinism. It was not before the Central Committee of 10 May in Arceuil that Thorez mentioned the Secret Speech and the critiques of Stalin. However, the general tone of Thorez’s speech was one of veiled criticism of Khrushchev. The reference to the “report ascribed to Khrushchev” at the BP meeting of 18 June, which insinuated the non-authenticity of the document, should be understood as criticism—veiled but clear to the well-informed.⁷¹ Moreover, Thorez seemed to criticize Khrushchev for having created the possibility for theoretical debates and revisions: he emphasized that “actions not words” were needed to cure the problems of communist rule.⁷² Resistance against the Khrushchevite changes within the PCF, on various levels, was strong enough to lead the traditionally very loyalist party to almost openly criticize the Soviet leadership.

In the context of the post-1956 confusion in the communist world, the PCF took on the role of the guardian *par excellence* of “orthodoxy.” At the

1957 Conference, the PCF was one of the protagonists among those condemning "revisionism," by which it referred to Yugoslavia and the PCI. When Tito was condemned in 1958, Thorez could hardly disguise his enthusiasm, considering it almost as a personal triumph.⁷³ Furthermore, the PCF press started attacking the PCI and launched fierce polemics against the party, following the latter's 8th Congress in December 1956. While it had already become clear at the Paris meeting of July 1956 how far the positions of both parties diverged, relations between them became further embittered up to 1961, and the PCF leadership continued to openly attack the PCI, notably for its theses on polycentrism. One reason why the PCF leadership reacted in such a harsh way to the carefully initiated changes of its Italian counterpart was the fact that it feared the diffusion of "Italian" ideas inside its own ranks; after 1956, the reform-minded in the PCF were often referred to as *les Khrushcheviens* or as *les Italiens*.⁷⁴

Taking up the role of prime defender of orthodoxy was, to the PCF, not only an expression of its traditional *fille a  n  e* role; nor was it simply a matter of an overestimation of its own influence in the communist world. Its significance was wider: behind it lay the old ideal-vision of a world communist movement, closely connected in doctrinal, organizational and strategic terms, and in which the Soviet Union continued to have a special status, doctrinally, organizationally and strategically. To the PCF, 1956 was the first step in a process towards the disconnection between this ideal-vision of the world communist movement and the role of the Soviet Union within it on the one hand, and its skepticism with regard to the actual policies of the Soviet leaders on the other. The role it conceived for itself, then, reflected genuine and persistent attempts to push the existing situation towards this ideal-vision. Similarly, its standard for the assessment of "orthodox" doctrine began to be disconnected from actual Soviet conceptions of it.⁷⁵

In the PCF, de-Stalinization was more sterile than in the PCI and was entirely disconnected from wider issues regarding doctrine, communist rule, and the history and nature of the PCF itself. The official interpretation of the problem of Stalinism was that "mistakes" had been made under Stalin in the Soviet Union. It was admitted that these could not be reduced to the personality of one leader alone, and that more general problems, such as the violation of collective leadership, had occurred. While Thorez asked for a "thorough Marxist analysis" addressing why these problems had occurred, he did not suggest any deeper-lying explanations, limiting himself to historical justifications such as the "objective situation" of war

and the global class struggle.⁷⁶ In no way did 1956 lead, in the PCF, to a reflection on the concept of socialism or of doctrine. Apart from the temporary and mostly hidden skepticism of the Thorez leadership vis-à-vis the Khrushchev leadership, the representation of the Soviet Union, by the leadership as well as among the rank and file, did not significantly change after 1956.⁷⁷

While resistance to the acceptance of de-Stalinization was strong, the national roads strategy and peaceful coexistence were only accepted in a reluctant and “personalized” way. Doctrinal changes in terms of the “road” to socialism or the model of socialism itself did not occur. Throughout 1956, Thorez affirmed on several occasions that the national roads strategy by no means implied doctrinal flexibility, and that the model of the Soviet Union and of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as well as the “general laws” on the road to socialism, were still valid. Publications by the PCF in 1956 and 1957 emphasized that the Bolshevik Revolution and the Soviet Union remained universal models. In the polemics with the PCI, the PCF went as far as to deny the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism, for lack of a historical example.⁷⁸

Peaceful coexistence was also hard to accept for the Thorez leadership, although after 1957 lip service was paid to it. With regard to peaceful coexistence, the PCF, and Thorez in particular, were initially troubled by the question of how it would relate to revolution. While the acuteness of this problem to the PCF itself and its domestic strategy was only to appear in full by the mid-1960s, the initial resistance to it was significant. The question of whether peaceful coexistence would be beneficial to the cause of revolution in the West was one of the central questions in the discussions of the Bureau politique between 1956 and 1961, although this did not have repercussions in the wider party.⁷⁹ A clear indication of the unease surrounding peaceful coexistence was the fact that P. Hervé, party journalist, former resistance member and private secretary to J. Duclos, was expelled from the party for pointing to the un-revolutionary implications of peaceful coexistence. Hervé developed an argument on the tension between peaceful coexistence and revolution in an orthodox (Bolshevik) sense.⁸⁰ His opting for the former threatened to undermine the PCF’s central sources of legitimation.

Despite its objections, however, the PCF leadership came to align itself with Khrushchevism by 1957. While in the mid term this was due to the Sino-Soviet conflict, in the short term it was the result of, besides the inva-

sion of Hungary and the anti-revisionist campaign, insistent pressure from the Soviet leadership. This led to an agreement between the two parties made at a bilateral summit meeting in June 1956 in Moscow. The Soviet leadership would support the Thorez leadership against internal opposition, especially with regard to the PCF's Algerian policy, and against the influence of Togliatti's "revisionism," and the latter would support Khrushchev as a matter of principle.⁸¹ Thorez needed this support from the new Soviet leadership, as inside the party his line of objections against Khrushchevism was seriously challenged. Inside the Bureau politique, Frachon and Rochet in particular were almost openly in disagreement with Thorez, and rumors circulated about a conspiracy.⁸² The party leadership was seriously criticized on the issue of Hungary, especially by intellectuals and *compagnons de route*. Many of them, including C. Roy, J.F. Rolland and temporarily J.P. Sartre, broke their ties with the party. Furthermore, circles of intellectuals who decided to stay in the party, as for example those collaborating in the journal *L'Etincelle*, openly challenged the party leadership during 1956 and 1957, inspired by both "Chinese" and "Italian" arguments.⁸³ Faced with the threat of loss of unity and identity, and in an attempt to demonstrate the historical integrity of the party as a member of the world revolutionary movement, the leadership responded to this by stressing continuities, especially in terms of doctrine, international alignment, and the myth of the Soviet Union.

3.2.2. *The crisis of legitimization: de Gaulle and Algeria*

In comparison to the PCI, the PCF did not perceive the need or the occasion to undertake major changes in its internationalism after 1956. It did not perceive the need, because domestically it was less isolated in terms of foreign policy than the PCI. In 1956, the governing Socialist Party, the Section française de l'internationale ouvrière (SFIO), led by G. Mollet, initiated contacts with the Soviet Union. An SFIO delegation met with Soviet leaders in May in Moscow. Although the concrete results of these contacts were meager, and although tension existed between the two governments regarding the war in Algeria, the two governments mutually recognized one another's strategic interests.⁸⁴ Moreover, the image of the Soviet Union in French public opinion in the Khrushchev era was generally a positive one.⁸⁵ Besides this, the PCF was not isolated among the forces of the Left in the same acute way as the PCI was in 1956. Throughout the 1956–1958 crisis it succeeded in avoiding a sharp deterioration in its relations with the

SFIO. In 1956, before the 20th Congress, the PCF announced its ambition to create a “new Popular Front” with the SFIO and the Radical Party.⁸⁶

The PCF did not perceive an occasion to change its internationalism, because alongside its traditional submission to the Soviet Union it depended on the Soviet Union and the world communist movement for its sources of legitimation more strongly than did the PCI. In addition to the disruptive effects of 1956, the party was faced with a profound crisis of legitimation due to the Algerian War and the coming to power of Charles de Gaulle as president in 1958. The domestic position of the PCF in the “traumatic” period of 1958–1962,⁸⁷ was such that both anti-imperialism and anti-fascism were seriously weakened as sources of legitimation. General de Gaulle returned to power after the political crisis of the spring of 1958 and the constitutional referendum of September, and with the promise to bring the war in Algeria to a peaceful end. De Gaulle and his *Rassemblement du Peuple français* (RPF) won the legislative elections in November, while the PCF dropped from roughly 25 per cent of the vote in 1956 to about 19 per cent, thereby losing about 1,600,000 voters.⁸⁸ It was clear that de Gaulle had been able to draw a substantial number of votes from the PCF, not only on the issue of Algeria, but also on the issues of anti-Americanism and national sovereignty.⁸⁹ De Gaulle’s was a fiercely anti-American discourse and he presented opposition to American hegemony in NATO and the Western world as a matter of national sovereignty. He initiated diplomatic contacts with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, a policy which was to become more evident from the mid-1960s onwards. In 1960, France and the Soviet Union signed a “friendship treaty.”⁹⁰

De Gaulle’s anti-Americanism, his rapprochement with the socialist regimes, and his ambition to present France as an independent force in the Cold War, was only beneficial to the PCF in a superficial way and in the short term. It legitimized its own anti-Americanism and, to some extent, its alignment with the Soviet Union. But in a more fundamental sense, de Gaulle posed the PCF a problem of legitimation, of identity, and, from the mid-1960s onwards, a problem of strategy. The PCF failed to elaborate a coherent and effective propagandistic answer to de Gaulle. Between 1958 and 1962, the PCF portrayed de Gaulle as a “class adversary” with radically opposed interests and motivations, but who nevertheless pursued an international policy which was “objectively” advantageous to world socialism.⁹¹ This ambivalent position vis-à-vis de Gaulle weakened the party’s oppositional force. It came about, besides its own interests in not antagonizing de

Gaulle's foreign policy paradigm too strongly, as a result of direct pressure exercised by the Soviet Union, which aimed at an agreement with Gaullist France in the context of the Cold War, and, especially, the Algerian War.⁹²

In the first instance the party had attempted to portray Gaullism as a form of fascism or as "paving the way to fascism." This campaign, however, proved not very effective and faded away by 1962. The analogies with fascism, apart from, possibly, the concentration of capital, were lacking in a too obvious way.⁹³ More fundamentally, de Gaulle himself, like the PCF but with a very different content, symbolized wartime resistance and represented to part of the French public anti-fascist values. The impossibility of building legitimization on anti-fascism sharply contrasted to the situation in Italy, where the continued existence of (neo-) fascist groups and their connections to mainstream politics did provide the PCI with a strong source of legitimization. Furthermore, de Gaulle caused an existential problem to the PCF, not simply because he was a powerful competitor in electoral terms and drew on the party's sources of legitimization, but also on a symbolic level. De Gaulle and the PCF both claimed to be the ultimate incarnation of the nation and of Frenchness; this claim was essential to both in their political identity.⁹⁴

Furthermore, anti-imperialism as a source of legitimization was weakened by the war in Algeria, the issue that dominated French politics in the mid-1950s to early 1960s. Throughout the Algerian crisis, PCF policies were characterized by ambiguity, inactivity and an unwillingness resolutely to engage in favor of decolonization. The PCF was caught between its understanding of French patriotism and French state interests, its alliance with other parties of the Left, in particular the SFIO, and responsiveness to Soviet interests and pressure. At the outbreak of the anti-colonial revolt in Algeria in 1954, the PCF, while protesting against French repression, did not support the insurgents. Up to 1960, the party refused to support the Front de libération nationale (FLN), favoring the slogan "Peace in Algeria" rather than "Independence for Algeria."⁹⁵ In March 1958, the PCF voted in favor of the "special powers" requested by the Mollet government. The PCF's justification of this, on behalf of unity with the socialists, could not obscure its blunt opportunism on the issue of Algeria.⁹⁶ When de Gaulle proposed a mixed system of "self-determination" in Algeria in September 1959, the PCF gradually shifted from initial skepticism with regard to what it called "a demagogic retreat from French responsibilities," to full support of Gaullist policy. The PCF here aligned itself with the Soviet position. The Soviet Union, fearful of American intervention in

Algeria, favored a “French solution” to the Algerian question—the ending of the war on the basis of a French-Algerian agreement on a gradual transformation to independence.⁹⁷

The PCF’s Algerian policy caused serious disagreement in the party ranks, and the PCF was never in touch with the protests against the Algerian War on the French streets.⁹⁸ The political groups and parties most active in support of Algerian independence were the Parti socialiste unifié (PSU), a party founded in 1960 by former disillusioned SFIO and PCF members, and the Trotskyite groups, in which Alain Krivine became a leading figure. A number of left-wing activists and intellectuals, among them J.P. Sartre, gave material support to the FLN. In 1960, they published the “Manifesto of the 121” (“Declaration on the Right to Insubordination in the War in Algeria”).⁹⁹ This document criticized the PCF leadership and argued for immediate independence and support for the FLN. Pressurized by this, the PCF did engage in mobilizing in favor of Algerian independence after 1960. However, the PCF had lost the initiative on the far Left and its credibility as an anti-imperialist force had vanished.¹⁰⁰ To be sure, the PCF did not suffer much from the Algerian crisis in terms of voters, due to the fact that French public opinion, partly even on the Left, was as ambivalent on the question of Algerian independence as was the PCF. At the same time, the Algerian question created a generation of leftist intellectuals and young critics who, as of 1960, systematically denounced the PCF’s non-revolutionary character and its involvement in Soviet superpower interests. There was a direct link between their debates on Algeria in the late 1950s and the events of May 1968.

This crisis of legitimation led the party leadership into ideological and strategic immobility, and led it either to ignore the rapid economic and societal changes or to perceive them in a highly biased way. Like Italy, France went through a phase of unseen economic growth and economic modernization during the 1950s and 1960s. While the contradictions stemming from this process were less evident than in the Italian case, modernization did lead to frustration among certain social groups, including peasants and unskilled workers, who felt threatened by new forms of competition and meritocracy. The PCF ignored the positive character of the economic development, thereby missing an opportunity to understand the transformation of society that was taking place. The party’s maintaining, up to 1964, of the thesis of the “absolute and relative impoverishment” of the French working classes was emblematic. The fact that the adoption of this

thesis brought the PCF into disagreement with influential Soviet theorists such as A. Arzumanian¹⁰¹ hinted at a first disconnection of its own understanding of orthodoxy from the actual situation in the Soviet Union.

To be sure, a number of PCF leaders and intellectuals did initiate a critical reflection on the party's domestic strategy in the context of the rapid changes taking place in French society and the economy.¹⁰² The most important challenge in terms of analysis of the domestic situation came from the review *Economie et politique*. The various contributors to this journal drew attention to the positive, modernizing effects of the expansion of the economy on the French population, including the workers. More sophisticated analyses of Gaullism were elaborated: it was argued that in some ways Gaullism might serve national interests by causing divisions in world capitalism. These views, although implicit in some of the party's own official positions, were not acceptable to the Thorez leadership. The party's "unity" was reasserted, in a highly Stalinist fashion, in 1961 with the exclusion of L. Casanova, BP member, and M. Sevrin, secretary of the organization. Although the party was, at a later stage, to take over some of the analyses of the excluded members, the effect of the affair in the short term was the further hindering of de-Stalinization and doctrinal innovations.¹⁰³

NOTES

- 1 For more detail on the secret speech and the circumstances in which it became known in the West, see Lazitch, *Le Rapport Khrouchtchev et son histoire*. An elaborate interpretation of de-Stalinization in the history of the communist world can be found in Carr  re d'Encausse, 1956. *La d  stalinisation commence*.
- 2 The PCF delegation, including future general secretary Waldeck Rochet, Marcel Sevrin and Etienne Fajon, at the end of the Congress met with Khrushchev and Ponomarev for further explanations regarding the Stalinist crimes. Robrieux, *La secte*, p. 26.
- 3 Lavau, "L'URSS et eux...", p. 191.
- 4 Reiman, "La rivoluzione d'ottobre," pp. 49–60.
- 5 I will come back to this in chapter four.
- 6 On the national roads strategy of 1956, from a theoretical perspective, see, for instance, Fejt  , *L'h  ritage de L  nine*, chapter two.
- 7 On the application of the national roads strategy to West European communism, see Duhamel, *Les Sovi  tiques et les voies de la r  volution*, pp. 199–205.
- 8 Some confusion surrounded these different variations; Legvold, "The Soviet Union," p. 332.
- 9 Legvold, "The Soviet Union," p. 338.

- 10 Duhamel, *Les Soviétiques et les voies de la révolution*, p. 207.
- 11 Light, *The Soviet Theory*, p. 47.
- 12 Rey, *Le dilemme russe*, pp. 280–281.
- 13 On the shift away from a bipolar worldview, see Petro, Rubinstein, *Russian Foreign Policy*, pp. 216–218.
- 14 For more detail on Soviet strategies outside Europe in this phase see Garthoff, *Détente and confrontation*, pp. 40–42; Rey, *Le dilemme russe*, pp. 282–283; Westad, *The global Cold War*, chapter 2.
- 15 On the Hungarian revolt and Soviet intervention see Valenta, “Soviet Policy toward Hungary and Czechoslovakia,” in Terry, *Soviet policy in Eastern Europe*, pp. 93–125; Fehér, Heller, *Hungary 1956 revisited*. For archive-based detail on the military aspects of the invasion see Györkei, Horváth, *Soviet military intervention in Hungary*.
- 16 There were 25,000 Hungarian casualties, among which 5,000 were killed. Roberts, *The Soviet Union*, p. 48.
- 17 On the Kádár regime in the late 1950s and 1960s, see, for example, Valenta, “Soviet policy,” pp. 110–125; and Rupnik, *L’autre Europe*, p. 313.
- 18 It was attended by 64 communist parties, of which 13 were ruling parties; all the European communist parties were present.
- 19 I use the term revisionism, like the term orthodoxy, only in a descriptive sense—that is to say, as it was used in the world communist movement at the time, and not as an analytical tool.
- 20 More detail on this conference, with a focus on the PCI and PCF, can be found in Griffith, “The diplomacy of Eurocommunism,” pp. 400–401.
- 21 Lazar, “Unité et crises,” pp. 29–43.
- 22 Kriegel, “The International Role of the French Communist Party,” p. 38.
- 23 See also Lazar, “Unité et crises,” p. 43.
- 24 While, in terms of adherents, both parties lost only marginally, in terms of voters the PCI stagnated while the PCF in 1958 went down dramatically; more on this below.
- 25 For a similar view see, for example, Marcou, *Les pieds d’argile*, pp. 12–13.
- 26 Marcou, *Les pieds d’argile*, p. 17. On the affinities between the French and Czechoslovak parties, see chapter 4.
- 27 On the—still relatively unknown—International Leninist School and the formation of (French) communist leaders, see Wolikow, Vigreux, “L’école Leniniste Internationale de Moscou.”
- 28 The International Department was heir to the Foreign Affairs Department, which had been the practical successor to the Comintern after its dissolution in 1943. For more detail see Kramer, “The Role of the CPSU International Department,” in Fleron, Hoffmann, Laird, *Soviet Foreign Policy*, pp. 444–463.
- 29 Shapiro, “The International Department of the CPSU,” p. 47.
- 30 Marcou, *Les pieds d’argile*, pp. 13–14. The journal appeared in Russian, French, English, Spanish and German.
- 31 In Italy, for example, this was organized by the Soviet-sponsored *Italtourist*.
- 32 Soviet financing of West European communist parties was, during the Cold War, mirrored in the West and particularly in Italy and West Germany, by

- significant American financial support, for example to the Italian Christian Democratic party.
- 33 The PCI share grew between 1965 and 1966 from \$ 2,500,000 to 5,700,000; the PCF share between the same years rose from 1,200,000 to 2,000,000. Riva, *Ora di Mosca*, pp. 46–65.
 - 34 The only account of this is Bartošek, *Paris–Prague*, chapter four. According to Bartošek there was most probably systematic funding from the other East European communist parties to the West European ones. Bartošek, *Paris–Prague*, p. 138.
 - 35 Information from the archives of the East German Communist Party SED, suggest that in 1968 the French communist trade union CGT received material from several “sister organizations” in the East.
 - 36 The most important one in France, for example, was the BERIM (*Bureau d’études et de recherches pour l’industrie moderne*), founded in 1948, which regularly sent commissions to the PCF. Bartošek, *Paris–Prague*, p. 117–130.
 - 37 On Eugen Fried, an agent in Paris sent by Moscow, see, essentially, Kriegel, Courtois, *Eugen Fried*.
 - 38 Gramsci, A. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1971.
 - 39 For a comparative overview of the relations which the PCI and PCF entertained with international communism, see Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, pp. 304–311. For a more “optimistic” view on PCI autonomy during the Comintern period, see Agosti, “The Weak Link in the Cast-Iron Chain.”
 - 40 Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, p. 310; Andrews, Mithokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, pp. 600–601.
 - 41 “Fille ainée de l’église communiste,” Kriegel, *Le système communiste mondial*, passim.
 - 42 The “highest responsibility” referred especially to the distribution of the allowances from the Assistance Fund. Bartošek, *Paris–Prague*, pp. 138–139.
 - 43 For a comparative discussion of the immediate repercussions of 1956 on the PCI and PCF, see Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, pp. 90–99. For the impact on the wider (political and intellectual) Left in both countries, see Groppo, Riccamboni, *La sinistra e il ’56 in Italia e in Francia*.
 - 44 This is suggested in Fejtő, *The French Communist Party*, p. 75.
 - 45 For more detail on PCF press coverage of the Hungarian crisis see Deli, *De Budapest à Prague*, pp. 83–88.
 - 46 Agosti, *Storia del PCI, 1921–1991*, pp. 79–81.
 - 47 Fejtő, *The French Communist Party*, p. 71.
 - 48 Gozzini, Martinelli, *Storia del partito comunista italiano*, pp. 456–458.
 - 49 A series of changes came about with respect to the internal organization and structures of the party. A turnover in personnel took place, as a larger number of older party cadres, such as P. Secchia, were sidetracked and replaced by a younger generation more in line with Togliatti’s strategy of careful change from above.
 - 50 Urban, *Moscow and the Italian Communist Party*, pp. 225–243. The full minutes of all the meetings of the Direzione throughout 1956 are published in Righi, *Quel terribile 1956*.

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- 51 The interview “Nove domande sul XXo congresso del PCUS” is published in (PCI, ed.) *Il Partito comunista italiano*, pp. 34–61.
- 52 I am here in disagreement with J.B. Urban, who has argued that already in 1956 Togliatti envisaged the priority of national party interests over the interests of the world communist movement (Urban, *Moscow and the Italian Communist Party*, p. 251). Rather, it seems that Togliatti could not imagine a fundamental and long-term divergence between the interests of the party and the interest of the wider communist movement.
- 53 It was Khrushchev who had first used the term polycentrism in connection to a new organization of the communist world, at the 20th Party Congress. Soon afterwards though, the term was discarded from official Soviet texts. The best discussion of polycentrism is still Sassoon, *The strategy of the Italian Communist Party*, pp. 99–116. For a discussion by Togliatti see Togliatti, “Il ‘sistema policentrico’ e la via italiana al socialismo,” in (PCI, ed.) *Il PCI e il movimento operaio internazionale*, pp. 62–81.
- 54 I use the term “maximalist polycentrism” here for the “strategic polycentrism” as used by Sassoon.
- 55 See the discussion in Boggs, *The Impasse of European Communism*, pp. 119–137.
- 56 Urban, *Moscow and the Italian Communist Party*, p. 232.
- 57 On Soviet pressures against the concept of polycentrism, see Vacca, *Togliatti sconosciuto*, pp. 189–193.
- 58 Sassoon, *The strategy of the Italian Communist Party*, p. 100.
- 59 See the memoirs of G. Cerreti, eyewitness to the first meeting. Cerreti, *Con Togliatti e Thorez*, pp. 319–323.
- 60 Pajetta, *Le crisi che ho vissuto*, pp. 76–79.
- 61 Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, p. 93.
- 62 On the PCI and Yugoslavia in this period see also Urban, *Moscow and the Italian Communist Party*, p. 234.
- 63 For a general picture of the changes in Italian society and economy, see, for example, Sassoon, *Contemporary Italy*, chapter two; Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia*, chapter seven.
- 64 In 1948, the Socialist Party had split over the Cold War issue into an anti-Soviet PSDI and a neutralist (though tending towards the communist world) PSI. On the shift of the PSI in 1955–1956, see Delg’Innocenti, *Storia del Pci*, esp. pp. 189–202. In the 1953 parliamentary elections, the PSI obtained 12 per cent of the vote, while the PCI obtained 22 per cent; in 1958, it rose to 14 per cent while the PCI stagnated. From the 1960s onwards, the PSI stagnated, while the PCI continuously rose. Lazar, “‘Affinités électives’,” p. 154.
- 65 On Italy and NATO in the early 1960s, see Nuti, *Gli Stati Uniti e l’apertura a sinistra*.
- 66 For a similar view see Flores, Gallerano, *Sul PCI*, p. 110–112.
- 67 Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, p. 95.
- 68 More detail in Gozzini, “Il rapporto tra il sindacato e il PCI” pp. 189–191.
- 69 Giorgio Amendola was a PCI member from 1929 and an MP from 1948; he headed the first PCI delegation to the European Parliament in 1969.
- 70 Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, p. 115

- 71 At the request of some of the more reform-minded members such as B. Frachon and future leader W. Rochet, a resolution was issued on some of the criticism of Stalin publicly expressed by Khrushchev at the 20th Congress; on the other hand, a statement on the “merits” of Stalin was added. Fejt  , *The French Communist Party*, pp. 54–69.
- 72 Fejt  , *The French Communist Party*, p. 66.
- 73 With respect to Yugoslavia, Thorez had clearly demonstrated his reservations with respect to Soviet–Yugoslav reconciliation. Nevertheless, in 1957 he did resume official contacts with Tito, although not wholeheartedly. Fejt  , *The French Communist Party*, p. 105.
- 74 Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, pp. 100–103.
- 75 A similar interpretation can be found in Fejt  , *The French Communist Party*, p. 58. Fejt   notes that its suspicions that the Khrushchev leadership was not capable of fulfilling the “leading role” in the movement were similar to the positions held by the Chinese communists at the time.
- 76 The new official interpretation of Stalinism was laid down in the publication *L’URSS et nous*. Verdes-Leroux analyses in greater detail the intellectual shifts in Marxist theory that accompanied de-Stalinization in the PCF. Verdes-Leroux, *Le reveil des somnambules*, pp. 67–70.
- 77 More detail on this can be found in Hincker, *Le Parti communiste*, pp. 51–52.
- 78 Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, pp. 101–102.
- 79 This is according to Hincker, *Le Parti communiste*, p. 51.
- 80 Fejt  , *The French Communist Party*, pp. 44–45.
- 81 Thorez had been aligned with Molotov, Khrushchev’s challenger in the Kremlin. Khrushchev’s victory over Molotov in the summer of 1957 thus signified the end of Thorez’s calculations with respect to Khrushchev’s elimination. Fejt  , *The French Communist Party*, pp. 68–69.
- 82 Moreover, it was rumoured that Waldeck Rochet was Khrushchev’s privileged contact in the PCF leadership. Fejt  , *The French Communist Party*, p. 62.
- 83 Fejt  , *The French Communist Party*, p. 71.
- 84 Fejt  , *The French Communist Party*, p. 63.
- 85 Hincker, *Le Parti communiste*, p. 51–52.
- 86 Fejt  , *The French Communist Party*, pp. 42–43.
- 87 Hincker, “Le Parti communiste fran  ais et de Gaulle,” p. 181.
- 88 Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, p. 108. See also the appendix.
- 89 According to Kriegel, de Gaulle drew 1.5 million votes from the PCF in 1958. Kriegel, “The PCF and the Fifth Republic,” p. 75.
- 90 On the early phase of Gaullist foreign policy, see Paxton, Wahl, *De Gaulle and the United States*, chapter three; Vaisse, *La politique   trang  re*, chapters one and two.
- 91 Kriegel, “The PCF and the Fifth Republic,” p. 73.
- 92 Kriegel, “The PCF and the Fifth Republic,” p. 73.
- 93 According to Hincker, the PCF expected repression against communists after 1958. Hincker, “Le Parti communiste fran  ais et de Gaulle,” pp. 181–194. Between 1962 and 1966, the official analysis of Gaullism was “a regime of personal power”; between 1966 and 1969, the focus was on the concentration of capital and the monopolies.

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- 94 For a similar view see Kriegel, "The PCF and the Fifth Republic," p. 74; and Bernstein, "Le PCF et de Gaulle sous la IV^e République," p. 84.
- 95 Fejtő, *The French Communist Party*, pp. 38–40.
- 96 Droz, "Communisme et Gaullisme face à la décolonisation," p. 104.
- 97 For the international Cold War context to the Algerian War, see Wall, *France, the United States and the Algerian War*.
- 98 Fejtő, *The French Communist Party*, pp. 99–101.
- 99 See the oral history sources in Charby, *Les porteurs d'espoir*.
- 100 Fejtő, *The French Communist Party*, p. 110.
- 101 Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, p. 106–107.
- 102 This partly followed from the opposition against the leadership which had emerged immediately following the 20th Congress, mainly in the review *L'Étincelle*, which had disintegrated in 1957. Other important centres of opposition were the review *Voies nouvelles*, and the cell of *Sorbonne-Lettres*.
- 103 There was also an "Italian" dimension to the affair, as Casanova had been closely connected to the Italian reform-minded communist Emilio Sereni. More detail on the so-called Sevrin-Casanova affair can be found in Dreyfus, PCF. *Crises et dissidences*, pp. 131–140; Robrieux, *Histoire intérieure*, pp. 497–580.

CHAPTER 3.

West European Communism and Internationalism, 1962–1967

Two major developments in the 1960s dramatically changed the international situation in which the West European communist parties operated: the Sino–Soviet dispute and the coming of European détente. The situation inside the communist world was at this point a highly complex one, and the PCI and PCF took part in the many disputes and positioned themselves with regard to the multiple cleavages. With a few exceptions, the literature dealing with the PCI and PCF in this period has not fully investigated the interactions between these parties' domestic developments and the complex interplay within the world communist movement. Here, the impact of the conflicts inside the world communist movement on these parties' general developments is at the centre of attention, and will be dealt with in some detail in the first part of the chapter. In the second part of the chapter, the changes in these parties' internationalism will be further explained in as far as they depended on domestic developments and on the situation of both countries in the East–West conflict.

The analysis looks at the domestic impacts of European détente in France and Italy and identifies the conditions of “domestic détente” in the two cases, or the gradual integration of the communist party into the political system and society. The relation between the impacts of European détente on the one hand, and domestic détente on the other, was very different in the two cases. In the case of the PCI, symmetry existed between European détente and domestic détente, a dynamic which pushed the party towards change in terms of its internationalism. In the case of the PCF, such symmetry did not exist: while domestically it was stimulated by a drive towards unity on the Left, European détente and the role played in it by the Soviet Union did nothing less than obstruct the PCF's programme for domestic détente.

1. THE COMMUNIST WORLD: THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE AND DIVERSIFICATION

1.1. *The Sino-Soviet dispute*

The Sino-Soviet dispute directly affected the West European communist parties on more than one level.¹ It did so, firstly, by changing the structure of the communist world; and secondly, by profoundly challenging “orthodox” doctrine. Domestically, the conflict weakened the sources of legitimization of the two parties, in particular revolution and anti-imperialism, and put pressure on their internal unity. Relations between the People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union started to deteriorate in 1957, and the conflict broke out openly in 1960.² Very different causes lie at the basis of the increasing tension between the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and Maoist China: superpower interests and territorial claims, personality clashes, disagreements regarding strategy towards the capitalist world and regarding communist strategy in the Third World, the arms race and the question of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, hegemony over the world communist movement, and disagreements regarding doctrine. From 1957 onwards Mao made it clear that he disapproved of peaceful coexistence, of the acceptability of parliamentary and non-violent roads to socialism, and, above all, of de-Stalinization. China disagreed with Soviet strategy in the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 and with the signing by the Soviet Union and the United States of the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963. Inversely, the Soviet Union under Khrushchev disapproved of the Great Leap Forward of 1958, and, under Brezhnev in 1966, of the Cultural Revolution.

In Eastern Europe, the Sino-Soviet rift strongly contributed to bloc disintegration in terms of doctrine, organization and the legitimacy of Soviet leadership. While Albania in 1960 allied with China, Romania took on a neutralist position and strongly criticized Soviet foreign policy and doctrine. The fact that the Chinese Communist Party developed a national course and its own definition of socialist revolution, and that the Soviet Union was not able to do anything about it, created a powerful precedent. Worse was that Maoism explicitly challenged Soviet doctrine from an allegedly more orthodox and revolutionary position. Maoist China started arguing that the Soviet Union was no longer a true revolutionary state and therefore could no longer be considered as socialist. Henceforth, Soviet authority in the world communist movement faced a permanent form of

radical criticism, which attacked it for being revisionist and, at a later stage, imperialist. Radical criticism of the Soviet Union had, of course, existed since the Bolshevik Revolution. In (Western) Europe, it had been influential especially through Trotskyite groups and parties. However, what was new about the Maoist challenge was, firstly, that it came to be a truly global challenge to Soviet power; and secondly, that it was embodied by a socialist state.

The effects of this on relations between West European communist parties and the Soviet Union were complex and ambivalent. On the one hand, the Sino–Soviet rift created space to renegotiate party autonomy as well as opportunities to exploit the tensions between the major actors in the communist world. Furthermore, the Soviet Union became, through its conflict with China, more dependent on support from (West) European communism in terms of organizational discipline and political and ideological support.³ To assure themselves of the support of these parties, the Soviet leaders increased the Assistance Fund to Western Europe from about \$ 7,800,000 in 1960 to about \$ 9,000,000 in 1964.⁴ Some Western parties, such as the Italian, the Swedish and the Norwegian, indeed took up the opportunity of the Sino–Soviet schism to emphasise their autonomy from Moscow, though remaining inside the Soviet camp. Other parties, such as the French, the Danish and the Belgian, displayed a high degree of loyalty to the Soviets.⁵

On the other hand, in terms of doctrine and internal party unity, the dispute tied the West European parties closer to the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union used the argument of the “threat of Maoism” to discipline the European communist parties and states—but with limited success only. Ideologically, there was no reason for West European communism to be on Mao’s side, as the latter denounced as revisionist the post-1956 strategies of the peaceful road to socialism and peaceful coexistence, which had become the bases of West European communist strategy. Furthermore, just as Mao criticized the Soviet Union from the Left and put into question its revolutionary character, the West European communist parties increasingly faced criticism from Maoist and other radical-revolutionary groups and parties in their countries. Maoist thinking and its revolutionary discourses and symbols appealed to young, radicalising public opinion in the West: it brought into question the revolutionary character of the Soviet-aligned parties and denounced the Eurocentrism of the Soviet-aligned communist movement. The diffusion of Maoist ideas put severe pressure on the internal unity of

these parties in the 1960s. In a similar way as the Soviet Union did vis-à-vis European communist parties, leaders of the West European communist parties invoked the “danger of Maoism” to contain dissent and to justify disciplinary measures.⁶

1.2. *Khrushchev’s campaign for “unity” and shifting alliances*

The Sino–Soviet dispute became intertwined with the pressing issue of the organization of a world communist conference. This was so because Khrushchev’s main motive for convening such a conference was a collective condemnation of Maoism. The diplomacy inside the communist world movement regarding the holding of such a conference shaped and altered alliances. As disunity in the communist world increased, the preparatory meetings became a forum in which disagreement became obvious, and in which some of the more autonomous-minded parties expressed their objections to Soviet dominance in increasingly explicit ways. The conference was eventually held in the 1960s, but it was dominated by the open conflict between the Soviet Union and China. In addition, the Soviet Union was challenged from the “right,” by the Italians and the Yugoslavs. The conference’s general call for the “struggle on two fronts,” which was an attempt at defining a “centrist” position between what was called “right revisionism” and “left dogmatism,” reflected this double challenge.

The PCF was fully supportive of the Soviet leadership, its delegation being one of the most enthusiastic defenders of the Soviet line against the severe Chinese attacks. This led it to downplay its anti-revisionism and its attacks on the PCI, and to concentrate on the “menace of dogmatism.” This created an alternative PCI–PCF alliance, which supported the Soviet Union; for example, the PCI and PCF helped to block Chinese attempts to delete from the documents all references to the 20th CPSU Congress. Nonetheless, the PCI was increasingly critical of the Soviet Union as a leader of the communist world. Although the PCI delegation explicitly claimed to be on the Soviet side in the Sino–Soviet dispute, it strongly emphasised the need for independence of each communist party. The “Chinese threat” improved the relative power position of the “revisionist” and autonomy-oriented parties. This was illustrated most clearly by the fact that the PCI succeeded in having the (Soviet) call for the isolation of Yugoslavia removed from the conference texts.⁷

After the open break between the Soviet and Chinese communist parties in 1962, Khrushchev made continuous efforts to convene another world

meeting. The main aim, an official condemnation of Maoism, was camouflaged as a campaign for the restoration of “unity” in the communist world. An increasing number of West European communist parties now opposed this, including the Swedish and British. The PCI’s criticism amounted to obstruction of the conference project: in October 1963, the Romanian and Italian communist parties both announced that they would continue to oppose the convening of an international conference in the given circumstances.⁸ General secretary L. Longo underscored this by visiting Tito in Belgrade in January 1964.⁹ Faced with such open PCI rebellion, the PCF fell back into its role as the keeper of “unity”: it launched an appeal for the holding of such a conference in late 1963. It attacked the PCI for its obstruction of the conference and for its polycentrism.¹⁰

Following Khrushchev’s downfall in October 1964, and after some initial hesitation, the new Brezhnev–Kossygin leadership continued attempts to bring about an anti-Maoist conference. The previously opposed positions of the PCI and PCF moved towards a pragmatic alliance, characterised by critical loyalty towards the Soviet Union. In early 1965, the PCI suddenly shifted from opposing the conference project to accepting it under certain conditions.¹¹ It did so partly because it had obtained a number of its own conditions—among others, the fact that the “Chinese question” would not be mentioned. The non-mentioning of China also resulted from a somewhat more reconciliatory position on the part of the Soviet leadership vis-à-vis China in around 1965, after Khrushchev’s downfall.¹² The relative autonomist victory was made possible by the cooperation between a number of West European communist parties, including the Italian, Spanish, Swedish and Norwegian parties, with Romania.¹³ The PCF now undertook a partial and tactical shift towards the “autonomist” position. While its ambition remained to enhance the cohesiveness of the communist world on the basis of a monolithic rather than a polycentric basis, the PCF realized that, given the strong divisions in the movement, a conference in the given circumstances would only increase disunity and provide a forum for various parties to attack the Soviets.

However, one “autonomist” proposal, for which the PCI in particular had been pressing, was not accepted and never would be: the invitation of non-communist groups to the conference. In July 1965 the PCI’s Central Committee, while deciding on conditional acceptance of the project, called for the invitation of non-Marxist groups “with a firm anti-imperialist attitude” from Africa, Latin America and Asia.¹⁴ In bilateral contacts with

East European communist parties, when asked about their position towards the world communist conference project the PCI leaders stated and restated that a condition for their adherence to the project was the invitation of non-communist groups.¹⁵ This policy, later to be called *allargamento*, was, from the mid-1960s onwards, the central vehicle for change in the PCI's internationalism, as polycentrism had been in 1956. Behind the discussions about the inclusion of non-Marxist groups from the Third World lies the more important question of attitudes with regard to Third World revolutions, an issue on which the Soviet and Italian communist positions diverged in the 1960s. The PCI constantly attempted to pressurize the Soviet leadership into more activism in the Third World, in order to expand the strategic effectiveness of the world communist movement outside Europe and to counter Maoist influence. In the PCI's view, a broad array of Third World liberation movements should be supported, whether explicitly Marxist or not. While the Soviet position was also flexible regarding the ideological orthodoxy of the Third World movements, it was highly concerned with these movements' loyalty and discipline, and therefore more selective in its support.¹⁶

In early 1965 the PCF used the strategic position in which it found itself to criticize the drafts of the conference resolutions, which were written by the Soviet delegation alone.¹⁷ In doing so, it expressed its dissatisfaction with Soviet leadership over the movement and Soviet capacities to guard orthodoxy in an unusually blunt, though "private," way. In late February, in response to the draft texts, the PCF sent a letter to the CPSU, criticizing these texts on two important points. The first of these was that peaceful coexistence should be mentioned more explicitly as an "essential task" of communist parties worldwide. Secondly, the PCF objected to a statement which foresaw the organization of bi- and multilateral meetings dealing with the conference preparations.¹⁸ Its objections here were a mix of its anti-polycentric position and the fear of being excluded from important decisions. While the positions of the PCF and the PCI at this point converged, it is important to note that the two parties had almost opposite motivations for obstructing the conference. The PCF, from what was a profoundly conservative position, feared it would bring *too much* diversity to the surface; the PCI feared this would not sufficiently be the case.¹⁹ Nonetheless, however tactical the motivations behind the PCF's position, this episode had a strong impact on the PCF's internationalism. The PCF's tactical shift towards the PCI's stance was provoked not only by disagree-

ment with the way in which the Soviets handled the Chinese question, but also, as will be analyzed below, by a largely hidden but severe deterioration in Soviet-PCF relations in around 1965, resulting from PCF domestic strategy and European détente.

1.3. *The creation of a West European communist cluster*

In the mid-1960s, the West European communist parties intensified their contacts with one another and started to operate as an informal pressure group inside the structures of the world communist movement. This led to a dynamic among the West European communist parties, which, despite its cautious character and the important differences between the parties involved, was important as it made official the general state of disunity in the communist world.²⁰ It influenced the parties involved, especially the smaller ones, and also, for the time being and on specific issues, the PCF. However, the weakness of this convergence was that it came about as a tactical move. This was so especially on the part of the PCF, but the PCI also conceived it in the framework of its agenda of putting pressure on the Soviet Union. Some of the literature on Eurocommunism has overestimated the autonomous character of the West European communist cluster in the WCM in this phase and has wrongly understood this development as running counter to the interests of the Soviet Union on a fundamental level.²¹ When analyzed in close connection with the events taking place in the wider communist world outlined above, it becomes clear that motivations behind the convergence were diverse and that its effects were blurred. The regional meetings and conferences were not only expressions of growing autonomy and polycentrism; they were also intended, particularly by the PCF leadership, to *limit* centrifugal tendencies in the world movement.

The West European communist parties converged because they perceived a minimal set of common interests *within* the world communist movement. Key moments in this development were, firstly, the rapprochement between the PCI and the PCF, which resulted in two summit meetings in 1965 (Geneva) and in 1966 (San Remo), and two regional conferences of West European communist parties, in Brussels in June 1965 and in Vienna in April 1966.²² In Geneva and San Remo it was decided to improve relations between the two parties and among West European communist parties more generally, in particular by organizing regional conferences on a regular basis.²³ The agenda for the Brussels Conference was completely in line with WCM programs: (1) the joint struggle for Vietnam, (2) the strug-

gle against "German militarism" and for a European system of collective security, including the joint struggle against the Multilateral Force, and (3) the organization of a campaign in support of the Spanish, Portuguese, Greek and West German communist parties operating in illegality. The Italian proposal to have peaceful coexistence as the general topic was strongly opposed by the French. The delegations discovered that many disagreements existed on important matters of domestic program, European and global strategy, and the organization of the world communist movement. For example, the Italians did not succeed in their aim to present a joint statement on the EEC and European integration.²⁴

The PCI-PCF rapprochement at this point was not considered by the orthodox communist parties in the East as running counter to their interests. It was viewed, for example by the SED, much as an expression of growing unity. At a meeting with the Italian communist Roasio in May 1965, Grund, a member of the Central Committee of the SED, affirmed that his party "had an interest in PCI-PCF rapprochement." The SED even attempted on this occasion to organize a meeting in Berlin between Longo and Rochet, which failed.²⁵ However, support from the East European parties rapidly faltered when the rapprochement took on a logic of its own. The communist parties in the East viewed the Brussels and Vienna conferences with suspicion, because they had a regional dimension which made it more difficult to control the dynamic. The PCF leaders regularly informed the Soviet and East European communist parties of the proceedings of the West European conference preparations.²⁶ Throughout the preparations for the Brussels Conference, the SED tried to influence and to control the process that came about through the Brussels preparations.²⁷ There are no traces in the archives of active East European attempts to influence the Vienna Conference. Still, it is clear that at least the SED remained very concerned about the regional conferences. It brought the issue up at a meeting with a PCI delegation in February 1967. On this occasion, the PCI presented the regional conferences as "a way to go against isolationist tendencies in the northwest European parties."²⁸

The PCI's motivations in the regional meetings were quite straightforward: attempting to bring about polycentrism on a West European level within the communist world. The PCF motives for engaging in this process were more complex. Firstly, it expected its involvement in a West European communist conference to be beneficial to its position and its bargaining power in the wider communist movement. In the context of its dis-

agreement with the Soviets over the Chinese question and over European strategy (see below), the PCF leadership started to see the advantages in a tactical alliance with the PCI, which could serve as a bargaining tool in its relationship to the Soviet Union.²⁹ To the PCF, the Brussels and Vienna meetings were instruments, first and foremost, in winning the PCI and the smaller parties over to its own positions on a number of current problems in the world communist movement. The attempt was to contain the doctrinal “revisionism” of the PCI and other parties and to counterbalance its influence among West European communist parties. The PCF leadership internally affirmed that the Brussels Conference should “not modify but instead work with the analysis made at the Conference of 81 Parties [in 1960].”³⁰ The PCF leadership remained wary of any kind of polycentric tendency. As the Bureau politique concluded in early 1965: “Bi- or multi-lateral meetings can be useful, but [we must] be very careful that these meetings do not lead to further diversification on a regional basis.”³¹

A final factor motivating the PCF was that the preparations for the Vienna Conference entirely coincided with the preparations of the Conference of European Communist Parties on European Security, which was held in Karlovy Vary in April 1967. The PCF was a strong advocate of this conference and explicitly intended the West European meeting to clear the ground for it.³² In unofficial talks during the Vienna Conference, the PCF delegation discussed with its Italian counterpart the issue of a pan-European communist conference on security and détente. Some months later, at a meeting with the East German SED leaders, the PCF gave a detailed report on the positions of the West European communist parties regarding the pan-European conference on security, thus amply referring to the Vienna talks.³³

Modes of interaction at the regional meetings differed somewhat from the old-style meetings of the world communist movement. A clear innovation was that the Vienna Conference did not end its sessions with a final declaration, which, in WCM custom, was usually an expression of enforced unanimity. However, it was precisely this unwillingness to impose conclusions that hindered the meeting from taking a clear stance with respect to their Eastern “brother parties” and prevented new proposals from gaining more influence. This, along with the differing PCI and PCF motivations, was to become a permanent characteristic of the West European communist cluster and Eurocommunism later on, limiting its potential as a vehicle for more fundamental change. Nevertheless, the Brussels and Vienna regional con-

ferences were important for the mere fact that they were held. The conferences and the time-consuming preparatory processes created a network of contacts among West European communist leaders, which was one important factor that made possible the dissent of most of the West European communist parties against the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

2. EAST–WEST RELATIONS AND THE RISE OF EUROPEAN DÉTENTE

From the mid-1960s onwards, a situation of détente emerged on the European continent. This was the result of changes in the security paradigms held by the Soviet Union and the United States after the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. In Western Europe, it resulted from the growing feeling that the Soviet Union no longer represented an immediate security threat. Furthermore, European détente resulted from the fact that the two superpowers to some extent shifted their Cold War attention away from the old continent. Soviet foreign policy during the 1960s, while aiming at expansion outside Europe, held a defensive view with regard to strategy on the European continent, aiming at “saving what was gained” on the old continent. During the 1960s, US policy in Western Europe oscillated between the wish to retreat somewhat from the heavy military, economic and political involvement it had engaged in during the previous decade, and attempts to maintain its hegemonic role in Europe. Finally, European détente went hand in hand with a crisis within both the Atlantic alliance and the Soviet-dominated bloc, as states and societal actors on both sides of the Iron Curtain demonstrated a rapidly growing interest in engaging in diplomatic, economic and cultural relations with “the other side.”

This was connected to a general shift to the Left in West European political opinion and a widespread questioning of bloc allegiance.³⁴ This situation was positive to West European communism, but only up to a certain point. It went together with a decrease in anti-communism in Western Europe and granted new legitimacy to the anti-NATO, and to some extent even the pro-Soviet, policies of these parties.

2.1. *Soviet strategy: global anti-imperialism and European détente*

When looking at the complex challenge which détente posed to West European communism, I will deal first with the problems posed to them by the Soviet definition of détente. Khrushchev was ousted from the Kremlin in 1964 and replaced by a troika, of which L. Brezhnev had emerged as the dominant figure by 1966. Foreign policy agenda and internationalism were focused on the following principles:

- to expand Soviet and communist influence outside Europe, primarily by supporting movements of national liberation
- to decrease tension with the United States and to initiate arms control talks on an equal basis, once strategic parity with the United States was achieved
- a military build-up in Europe to achieve this strategic parity
- in response to West Germany's *Ostpolitik*, initiated in 1966, to secure the recognition of the two German states and the post-1945 borders (the so-called territorial status quo)
- to halt centrifugal tendencies in the communist world, to restore discipline and to counter the influence of Maoism.³⁵

Under Brezhnev, Soviet priorities and perspectives shifted from the European continent to the globe. There were Soviet interventions in Vietnam, and during the 1970s in Ethiopia, Angola and Mozambique. From the mid-1960s onwards, one of the central issues in Soviet global strategy was involvement in the Vietnam War and support to the North Vietnamese Communist Party, led by Ho Chi Minh. The triumphant and seemingly non-problematic rhetoric on solidarity with the Vietnamese communists, omnipresent in the world communist movement at the time, in fact dissimulated very different views on how to end the war in Vietnam. While both Moscow and Beijing supported the North Vietnamese communists, they did so from a different perspective on the importance of Third World liberation movements in the global Cold War. Although Soviet economic, technical and military support to North Vietnam was, as of 1966, very significant, Moscow was also concerned with avoiding US retaliation. The Soviets continuously attempted to pressurize Hanoi into a negotiated settlement with the Americans. By contrast, Mao, for whom the Cold War had turned from an East–West conflict into a North–South one, advocated the contin-

uation of the guerrilla war until the bitter end. The Chinese communists understood Vietnam as the start of a wave of local anti-imperialist wars which might culminate in a global one. While Moscow hoped the struggle in Vietnam might build towards greater unity in the world communist movement under its leadership, exactly the opposite happened in the short term. In the autumn of 1966, China refused the Soviet proposal of “anti-imperialist unity of action” in Vietnam, which provoked a further deterioration in Sino-Soviet relations.³⁶

Nonetheless, around the world the North Vietnamese communists and Ho Chi Minh became the prime symbols of the struggle against imperialism. In Western Europe and elsewhere, propaganda in favor of the Vietnamese revolution reinforced opposition against American hegemony. It also updated the otherwise somewhat rusty image of the Soviet Union as a force of liberation and revolution. The Soviets understood that Vietnam was to West European communism the most suitable vehicle for the expansion of domestic support. Vietnam dominated public-political discourses on the West European Left in the second half of the 1960s, and it enabled the Soviet-aligned communist parties to find common ground with the peace movement and other anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist groups. However, while “Vietnam” was indeed instrumental to the general rise of the Left in Western Europe in this period, it proved to be first and foremost to the advantage of Maoist, Trotskyite, and other radical and revolutionary groups rather than the Soviet-aligned parties. The different positions of the Soviet Union and China with regard to the war in Vietnam were translated into different positions among these left-wing groups in the West.

While outside Europe the expansionist dimension in Soviet foreign policy prevailed, stability and preservation were the key words with respect to the old continent. From the Soviet perspective, détente was a means to normalize relations with Western Europe, and Germany in particular, and a stable Europe was a means to normalize relations with the United States.³⁷ The Soviets wished to improve relations with the West European states for three reasons: firstly, trade and the exchange of technological and scientific know-how; secondly, to create the conditions for arms control and negotiations; and thirdly, to achieve an agreement on Germany.³⁸ Around the mid-1960s a serious conflict arose inside the WTO regarding the implications of détente for Europe, which put the Soviet Union in a precarious position.³⁹ Disagreement clustered around the issues of defense strategy and the German question. The WTO strategy with regard to the German

question was seriously disturbed by the initiation in 1966 of *Ostpolitik*. *Ostpolitik*, the policy of the “Grand Coalition” government under Chancellor L. Erhard and foreign minister W. Brandt, aimed at “change through rapprochement” with the East and ultimately at German unification”

In the longer term, the aim was to influence the communist regimes through contacts with the West, “from above” as well as “from below” (via citizens and grass-roots movements), and ultimately to achieve the reunification of Germany.⁴⁰ The first sign of *Ostpolitik* was the abandonment of the Hallstein doctrine in 1966, which had stipulated the non-recognition of any state that recognized the German Democratic Republic. While Moscow initially showed some enthusiasm for the new policy, it was seriously opposed by its East European allies, especially East Germany and Poland. The Soviets for the moment chose to avoid further cracks in communist solidarity and to satisfy both East Germany and Poland in their security concerns. The recognition of the territorial status quo by West Germany remained the *sine qua non* for any kind of negotiations. This policy, however, was seriously disrupted by the fact that Romania and Yugoslavia initiated diplomatic relations with Bonn in 1967. The outcome of these discussions was a specific policy of détente, laid down at two meetings: the WTO meeting in Bucharest in 1966, and the Karlovy Vary Conference of European Communist Parties on European Security in 1967. In the “Declaration on the Strengthening of Peace and Stability in Europe,” signed by all WTO members in Bucharest in 1966, a concept for a “system of collective security in Europe” was developed, including:

- the increase of bi- and multilateral contacts between states of Eastern and Western Europe, in cultural, economic and political terms
- military détente through the initiation of talks on the disarmament of the European continent
- the territorial status quo: the recognition of the Oder–Neisse line and of the German Democratic Republic
- the renunciation of nuclear weapons by both German states
- the calling of a conference of European states on security
- the eventual dissolution of both military blocs.⁴¹

Although the actual commitment to it remained unclear, the perspective of the simultaneous dissolution of both the WTO and NATO was significant, because it was presented as the ultimate goal of détente. The Karlovy

Vary conclusions, with respect to the Bucharest Declaration, shifted somewhat back to anti-American and anti-German discourses. This was a matter of opportunity: firstly, the most anti-West German parties (East Germany and Poland) swiftly reacted to the NATO crisis in 1966–1967; and secondly, there was an ambition to exploit growing anti-Americanism in Western Europe.⁴²

2.2. West European communism and (Soviet) détente

The general atmosphere of détente and the developing of cultural and economic ties across the Iron Curtain had positive effects on the domestic position of the West European communist parties in the short term. It led to a decrease in anti-communism in Western Europe and to openings towards the (non-communist) Left in several countries, including Italy. In the case of France, the rapprochement with the socialist regimes brought the country into a situation in which the possibility of communist participation in government no longer seemed constrained by bloc allegiance. However, on a more fundamental level, détente created new problems for West European communism, especially for the PCF. The Soviet and world communist concept of European détente posed two problems for the West European communist parties. A first problem was Moscow's search for friendly relations with the West European governments. A second problem was the strategic priority of the German question and of the territorial status quo, for the Soviets and especially for East Germany and Poland. This made changes in the "balance of forces" on the continent difficult. At the heart of the matter lay the fact that Soviet rapprochement to a number of (non-communist) governments in the West by no means brought West European communists closer to power, and in some ways even obstructed their domestic strategy. The Soviets' positive response to the very conservative and traditionally anti-communist Charles de Gaulle revealed the Soviets' strategic priorities and the negative implications of these for the West European communist parties.

The Soviet conception of the role of West European communism in détente should be understood in the light of the broad European and global strategic options outlined above, and can be summarized as:

- support for the Soviet aim of strategic parity with the United States: pressure, via the West European governments, towards the disarmament of Western Europe and towards disunity in NATO

- global anti-imperialism: propaganda in favor of North Vietnam and other liberation struggles and pressure on the West European governments on this issue
- the German question: pressure on West European governments and public opinion for the recognition of the GDR and the border issue
- in the world communist movement, the West European communist parties were considered crucial in intellectually and morally backing the Soviet Union in matters of ideological continuity and of “orthodoxy” against “heresies” or “deviancies.”⁴³

The actual spread of socialism and revolution to Western Europe was, in this overall scheme, a very low priority. Around the mid-1960s, revolution in the West had, from the Soviet perspective, become subordinate to relations with the Western powers—in particular concerning a German settlement and disarmament—to its global ambitions, and to its competition with China.⁴⁴ This was reflected, for example, in the fact that the total amount of the Assistance Fund designated to the non-ruling European communist parties stagnated, while under the Khrushchev years it had grown steadily.⁴⁵ If the West European communist parties at this point did not (openly) analyze this as a clear-cut divergence of interests, they did perceive a lack of attention for their cause from the Soviet Union and the world communist movement. The West European communist parties reacted to this, generally, in three ways. Firstly, they formed a cluster among themselves inside the world communist movement, as discussed above; secondly, they shifted attention to the domestic level of operation; and thirdly, they started cautiously to criticize the Soviet regime. These reactions will be analysed below for the PCI and PCF.

The Conference of European Communist Parties on European Security held in Karlovy Vary in 1967 gave expression to the complex challenge of (Soviet) *détente* to West European communism. It did so in two ways: firstly, in the world communist movement, by provoking irritation among all these parties regarding their status as second-rank parties in the organization and strategies of the communist world; and secondly, in the context of the East–West conflict, by giving proof of the very different conceptions of *détente* among the West European parties. With this meeting, the Soviet leadership hoped to create the necessary “ideological” backing for its policy of *détente* in the world communist movement, particularly from the West European communist parties that did not participate in the bloc meetings,

such as the Bucharest meeting of 1966. It was hoped that the topic of *détente* and “peace” could convince the West European parties of the interests they shared with the other parties in the world communist movement.⁴⁶

Widespread irritation was caused among the Western parties on the issue of the draft resolutions of the Karlovy Vary meeting. These were proposed by the Polish party and had been, in old communist habit, written before the meeting took place. At a preliminary meeting between the Italian leaders E. Berlinguer and L. Longo and the Polish leader Kliszko in October 1967, the former formulated a number of requests.⁴⁷ Most importantly, “progressive forces” and non-communist groups from Western Europe and the Mediterranean region should be invited to the conference. Furthermore, the meetings should be open to (communist and non-communist) journalists, and, generally, “it should not be a question of first the East Europeans, then the others.”⁴⁸ The PCI’s demands were supported by the PCE and smaller parties such as the British, Austrian, Swiss, Swedish, Icelandic and Norwegian; they were not, however, accepted. In the autumn of 1966, the PCF was asked by the Soviets to be the official convener of the conference, with the Polish POUP.⁴⁹ Then, in an attempt to assuage the Italians and, probably, to divide the emerging West European coalition, the Soviets unexpectedly asked Longo, head of the Italian delegation, to deliver the general closing speech to the conference. As by custom this was done by the hosting party (the CPCS in this case), the matter seriously irritated the French who felt by-passed as the most loyal and “responsible” Western party.⁵⁰

More importantly, the Karlovy Vary Conference also brought to the surface the fundamental disagreements that existed among West European communist parties themselves regarding questions of European strategy, notably the German question. This caused cracks in the vulnerable West European cluster that had recently formed itself. On the German question, the central issue of the Karlovy Vary Conference, cleavages were complex and cut through the East–West division. While in his speech Brezhnev suggested the possibility of a positive response to *Ostpolitik*, the delegations of East Germany and Poland fiercely rejected this. Among the Western parties, the PCI strongly argued in favor of a positive response to Bonn, which would go beyond rhetoric and would consist of actual co-operation. Other parties, such as the PCE and the KPOe, advocated a positive response to Bonn. The PCF, the Danish and the (absent) Dutch parties, by contrast, remained wary of any positive re-evaluation of West German politics.⁵¹ The

positions on this issue were first and foremost *national* ones and closely connected to the domestic sources of legitimation of the communist parties.

The impossibility for West European communism to reach a common position on more strategic matters, generally, reflected the ambivalent value of the Soviet conception of *détente* to them. Communist parties such as the French continued to perceive the global class struggle in terms of the classic East–West confrontation. Relaxation of this confrontation towards the United States or West Germany appeared to them as a retreat from the global class struggle. The Italians, Spanish and others tended to stress the positive dimension of *détente* in so far as it was a revolutionary movement on a world scale which created the conditions in which they could escape their domestic isolation, and which resulted in a general shift to the Left in Western Europe. The impossibility among West European communists to agree upon an analysis of *détente* and *Ostpolitik* goes to the heart of the reasons behind the impossibility of bringing about a lasting West European communist grouping during the Czechoslovak crisis and, later, during Eurocommunism.

2.3. *The crisis of Atlanticism*

The communist *détente* policies were mirrored by tendencies towards *détente* expressed by West European governments and in public opinion. This took place in the context of a severe crisis in transatlantic relations and a crisis of “Atlanticism” more generally, as not only a military, but a political, economic and cultural alliance.⁵² In the mid-1960s, divergences occurred in military, political and economic matters between the United States and several West European governments, primarily France and West Germany. This resulted from a mix of security concerns in Western Europe, dissatisfaction with American leadership over the alliance, and a wish to have a greater say and a (political and economic) interest in Eastern Europe. The crisis of the Atlantic alliance created the possibility for West European governments to pursue more autonomous foreign and military policies. Under President de Gaulle, France increasingly objected to American hegemony over Europe and wished to develop its own national nuclear program, the so-called *Force de frappe*. In political and economic terms, de Gaulle envisaged an independent, strong and enlarged Europe, “from the Atlantic to the Urals,” based on the national sovereignty of strong states (*l’Europe des Patries*). Gaullist *détente* strategy in the mid and late 1960s consisted of a rapprochement with the socialist regimes of Eastern Europe

and the re-enforcement of the French–German axis, in which the French would have a nuclear monopoly. In a highly publicised encounter, de Gaulle met with Brezhnev in Moscow in June 1966. Furthermore, de Gaulle visited Romania and Poland, and foreign minister Couve de Murville visited Warsaw, Prague, Bucharest, Budapest and Sofia throughout 1966–1968. These strategies were aimed at upsetting the existing European order, by which the two superpowers largely determined the fate of the continent and which reduced France’s role in the world to a secondary one. West Germany was susceptible to this vision, and in 1963 the Bonn–Paris axis was reinforced by a bilateral treaty.

Gaullist détente strategy, however, was handicapped by two problems. The first blank spot of Gaullist détente were the relations of this new Europe with the Soviet Union. Although it was not his central aim, de Gaulle had an interest in the disintegration of the Soviet sphere of interest, as this was expected to run parallel with the disintegration of the Western bloc. However, as the immediate effect of his policies was a crisis in the Western alliance, his interests tended to converge in the short term with Soviet interests.⁵³ Secondly, the limits of Gaullist détente lay in the German question, as both Romania and Poland made it clear to de Gaulle that there could be no real détente without the recognition of the GDR. However, in order not to upset the Paris–Bonn axis, de Gaulle did not touch upon the question.⁵⁴ While not capable of fundamentally upsetting the European order, Gaullist foreign policy did cause serious crises in the EEC as well as in NATO. In the EEC, disunity rose to a peak when de Gaulle blocked British entry in 1963. A crisis occurred in the EEC institutions, which brought to the surface fundamental disagreements regarding the political and economic nature of the communities, such as the question of supranationality and trade protection. In NATO, in 1964, France blocked the American proposal for a Multilateral Force (MLF), a missile fleet under mixed NATO command. The crisis broke into the open when, in 1966, France left the joint military command of the alliance.⁵⁵

While the EEC and NATO found themselves in crisis, alternative conceptions of “Europe” multiplied. Pan-European visions of a “Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals,” of a “third way” Europe, a neutralist Europe, were diffused rapidly and with enthusiasm. However diverse these ideas, however vague sometimes their content, and however different the orientations of their advocates, they all seemed to hint at two things. Firstly, there was, in diplomatic terms, the search for a new role for the European

continent in the world, independent of both superpowers. Secondly, in terms of the socioeconomic and political order, there was a search for an alternative model of society, different from both American-modeled capitalism and from Soviet-modeled communism.

Frustration in Western Europe regarding American hegemony, in particular in the context of the protests against American involvement in the Vietnam War, went hand in hand with a revival of Marxist ideologies and a shift to the Left in public and political opinion. On the one hand, socialist and social democratic parties entered government with reform programs in West Germany, Great Britain, and in Italy. On the other hand, by the end of the decade sudden outbursts of protest occurred in the major cities of France, Italy, West Germany and Britain and other countries. These were directed against the domestic political and socioeconomic order, against the world order and international alliances, and against hegemonic culture. While cultural and sociological phenomena, such as the baby boom and the construction of new youth cultures, were at the basis of the contestation movements in Western Europe in the late 1960s rather than political problems in the strict sense, the discourses which the young radicals took on were profoundly political. These referred not only to domestic politics but also to international politics and the bipolar world constellation. As we will see below for the cases of Italy and France, these protests were the result of *détente* in Europe in the sense that they were only the most radical expressions of a more widespread questioning of American hegemony and Atlantic loyalties.

3. THE PCI: THE SYMMETRY OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Between 1962 and 1967, the PCI pursued its quest for autonomy in the world communist movement. There was, however, a significant change in its internationalism at this point: whereas, before 1962, the quest for party autonomy and new modes of interaction inside the world communist movement had been mostly instrumental to domestic affairs, now a more fundamental questioning of the geographical boundaries of the communist world took place, which was, at the same time, a questioning of the ideological contours of socialism. It was also a search for an alternative to the bipolar

world order, understood as the necessary precondition for the coming about of socialism in Italy. This dynamism came about as the result of the interaction between the development of European détente and the domestic political changes in Italy.

3.1. *Domestic détente*

The political situation in Italy after 1962 can be described as a “domestic détente”: the PSI entered a coalition government with the Christian Democratic Party (DC), a general shift to the Left took place, and anti-communism decreased. The PCI’s socio-cultural isolation gradually came to an end by the mid-1960s, although not its political isolation. To an increasing number of non-communist Italians, the PCI gained some degree of mainstream respectability as the major political force on the Left. Increasingly, the party succeeded in presenting itself as a strong, hardworking and disciplined organization whose militants were concerned with the everyday problems of common people. The PCI’s strategy of infiltration in all fields of public life proved successful in its own terms: it now had its own established strongholds in mass media, journalism and academia. It retained a strong implant in society and preserved its distinct identity and subculture. However, membership figures continued to decline up to the late 1960s, although this was a more general phenomenon in West European societies. More importantly, the party was not sufficiently rejuvenated, for which it was to pay a high price in the context of the radical student and worker protests of 1968–1969.⁵⁶

The DC’s “opening to the Left” policy was caused by a crisis in the DC, the breakdown of its alliance with the (neo-fascist) Right, and the rise of both the socialist and communist parties. Due to opposition from public opinion, it was increasingly difficult for the DC to base its majority on support from the far Right, the reactionary monarchist party and the neo-fascist Movimento sociale italiano (MSI).⁵⁷ This became very apparent through the massive popular protests against the MSI congress taking place in Genoa, symbolic city of the Resistance, in June 1960. The political mobilization of June 1960 was crucial in awakening new trends of radicalism and contestation. The PCI benefited from the rediscovery of an anti-fascist identity and discourse.⁵⁸

The PSI, which had, up until 1956, still been considered a PCI and Soviet client party, for the first time supported the DC-dominated government in parliament in September 1962 and entered government in December 1963.⁵⁹

Two immediate causes made majority opinion in the PSI leadership swing in favor of government participation: the fact that the DC agreed with the main condition posed by the socialists, the nationalization of the electricity sector; and secondly, the national elections of April 1963. The electoral stagnation of the PSI and the clear victory of the PCI (which now reached 25 per cent of the vote) urged the PSI to aim at becoming the preferred partner on the Left. From the outset an important left-wing current opposed the choice, adopted by party leader P. Nenni, of entering government. The party split over the issue as two left-wing leaders, Basso and Vecchiotti, refused to vote for the governmental program in parliament in December 1963. In early 1964, Basso formed the Partito socialista italiano di unità proletario (PSIUP), which, as we shall see below, was to radicalize and to become a threat to the PCI from the Left.⁶⁰ After the PSIUP schism, the PSI moved to the centre, which naturally brought up the issue of unification with the social democratic PSDI again. The two parties unified in 1966 into the Partito socialista unificato (PSU).

The three centre-left governments under A. Moro, which governed the country up to June 1968, proposed a program of neo-Keynesian economic reforms, including, among other things, the nationalization of key industries such as the electricity sector, the stimulation of agriculture in the South through massive investment, and the modernization of the country's education system. However, by 1968 there was a widespread feeling that the *centro-sinistra* governments had failed to carry out a coherent reform program. The centre-left coalition became increasingly weak and immobile, due to the weakness of the PSI, worsening economic circumstances, and the mobilization of reactionary and conservative forces against it. Symptomatic of this was the plan for a coup secretly developed in the summer of 1964 by the head of the *carabinieri*, General de Lorenzo.⁶¹

The coming to power of the centre-left government signified a subtle shift in foreign policy orientations. Italy, traditionally among the most loyal allies of the United States in NATO, now expressed some objections against American foreign and military policy. The revival of neutralist tendencies in the PSI was one factor which cast some shadow over Italo-American relations. In addition, Italian political opinion in the early 1960s was somewhat irritated with US European policies, as Italy, like other European states, wished for a greater share in military and nuclear decision making.⁶² At the same time, the Italian government followed a general European trend by demonstrating an interest in improving (economic, cultural, but

also political) relations with the communist regimes. The visit by Soviet Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Podgorny to Rome in January 1967 marked the high point in this evolution. Furthermore, Italian foreign minister Fanfani increasingly put emphasis on the issue of pan-European co-operation and security. Especially on the issue of trade relations with the East, the positions of the PCI and the Italian government seemed to converge, which was a sign of the benefits of détente to the PCI.⁶³

The challenge posed by domestic détente and the coming about of the centre-left coalition significantly affected not only the PCI's domestic strategy but also its identity and doctrine. It was in response to the coming about of the centre-left government that the PCI made a number of crucial, longer-term choices regarding domestic strategy. In the early 1960s, the PCI tended to elaborate analyses of Italy's political and economic problems in an increasingly concrete and less dogmatic way. Neo-Keynesian economic planning and structural reforms were at the centre of attention at the 10th Party Congress in 1962 and at the conference on "Tendencies of Italian Capitalism" organized in the same year by the Istituto Gramsci. The discussions in the party leadership which had developed since 1960 on domestic strategy and reform on the one hand, and on Stalinism on the other, developed after Togliatti's death in 1964 into a debate that was remarkable for its openness and its creativity. While the debate on domestic strategy crystallized around the question of what attitude to take towards the centre-left government and towards the PSI, underlying it was the more fundamental problem of how to relate to the rapid modernization of Italy. The debate evolved into a sharp antagonism between two upcoming leaders, P. Ingrao, who headed the "Left," and G. Amendola who led the "Right."⁶⁴

The two tendencies agreed on two essential points: firstly, that the *centro-sinistra* had failed to carry out the necessary political and economic reforms; and secondly, that a classic Left alliance with the Socialist Party was not a viable strategy in a country such as Italy dominated by the Christian Democratic Party. They disagreed, however, on the strategy for an alternative alliance. The Right thought in terms of classical schemes of an expansion of political alliances with political parties ("from above"), a variation of the 1930s Popular Front model. In his controversial but influential article "Hypothesis on reunification," Amendola argued for the formation of a unified party on the political Left: a merging of the PCI, the PSI, and the leftist currents in the DC. He argued that the PSI could be saved from becoming a social democratic party through an alliance with the PCI. Simil-

arly, the integration of the working classes in the capitalist system could be avoided by a broad left-wing government coalition. The first step on the “Italian road to socialism,” in this view, was the development of a program of structural reforms of the economy and democratization of the political system. More clearly than the other PCI leaders, Amendola defined governmental participation as the short-term goal for the (enlarged) communist party and emphasized its responsibilities as a *national* party.⁶⁵

Ingrao and the Left, by contrast, rejected the strategy of co-operation with the Socialist Party or (segments of) other existing parties, and called for the creation of a “workers’ alternative.” It was envisaged not as a party in the Leninist sense, but as a radically anti-capitalist “social bloc” based on the autonomy of the working classes. For the time being, the PCI should engage in alliances with “progressive” groups in civil society, on a social and ideological basis rather than on an organizational one. This included alliances with the Catholic working masses, which, in this view, should be separated from the party structures of the DC. The Ingrao current, although far from being an ideologically homogeneous group, became strong by the mid-1960s. It appealed to the new radicalism among young PCI militants and to a new form of “workerism” which resulted from the rapid industrialization of Italy and from a general, often fluid, dissatisfaction with the gradualist and reformist strategy of the party leadership. The Ingrao current was influenced by other socialist experiences than the Soviet one. While its emphasis on autonomy, its conceptions of “socialism from below” and “self-management,” referred to Yugoslavia, it was strongly influenced by (proto-) Maoist revolutionary discourses. *Ingraianni* openly disagreed with the PCI’s critique of Maoism and in some cases with peaceful coexistence.⁶⁶

Much of the literature has focused on the question of whether these debates caused innovation in the PCI’s domestic strategy, or rather stagnation.⁶⁷ In comparison with the PCF, the innovations carried out in terms of doctrine and the analysis of capitalism are evident. Both the Left and the Right demonstrated the will to adapt to the rapid societal changes by responding to different aspects of these changes. In terms of political strategy, the Left was more in touch with new radicalism among young people and young workers than was the Right, although its project for a new type of alliance, not party-based, was more difficult to envisage and at times unclear.

At the 11th National Congress of the PCI in 1966, the theses of the Left were largely rejected.⁶⁸ The strategy laid down was the creation of a broad Left party rather than of a “new social bloc.” With this perspective, the PCI

made the longer-term choice of entering the sphere of mainstream politics, on the basis of the existing party system. At the same time, however, the exact configuration of this left-wing alliance remained unclear and the program included some aspects of the Ingrao model, such as privileged relations with progressive Catholic currents.⁶⁹ It was the unwillingness of the party to make a clear-cut choice, either for an immediate alliance with the Socialist Party, or for a radically different party concept, which led to the immobility that characterized the party's strategy up to the early 1970s. Moreover, the focus on political strategy and economic reforms made it difficult for the party to capture the profound changes that Italian society was undergoing in cultural and social terms.⁷⁰

3.2. *Polycentrism, détente and Europe*

After 1961, polycentrism was reintroduced in PCI texts. It did not envisage the weakening of internationalist allegiances, nor even the re-enforcement of individual party autonomy *per se*. Rather, the idea was to adapt the communist world and its internal organization to the changed global conditions and to make it more effective in the global expansion of socialism. In this view, geographical scope and political potential were more important than doctrinal discipline. This expansion of international alliances in the longer term led the party to stretch its concept of socialism. This was the general line of thought in Togliatti's famous "Yalta Memorandum," which he wrote in the summer of 1964, a few days before his death, and which was intended to be sent to Khrushchev.⁷¹ His pessimism regarding the possible reconciliation of the Soviet Union and China led Togliatti to advocate doctrinal pluralism and political diversification inside the world communist movement. In his view, China should be recognized as a regional centre of power over the smaller Asian parties, in political as well as in ideological terms.⁷² In a similar line of thought, polycentrism in PCI usage in the early 1960s took on a third meaning: not only the communist movement, but the entire world was becoming polycentric. Decolonization, détente and the crisis in the Western alliance were understood as the major signs of universal polycentrism, and of the end of bipolarism.

The 10th National Party Congress of 1962 was largely devoted to the issues of European détente and global anti-imperialism.⁷³ It was largely the Khrushchevite line on peaceful coexistence which created the possibility for the PCI to innovate its internationalism. The choice to put peaceful coexistence at the heart of the discussions was motivated by a wish to sup-

port the Soviet leadership and to counterattack Mao, who strongly criticized the PCI for its “reformism.” Moreover, the congress texts were, strictly speaking, not heterodox. Nonetheless, the points which were stressed gave proof of a growing awareness of the PCI’s *own* interests in both peaceful coexistence and anti-imperialism. Given Italy’s position in the East–West conflict, international détente in the sense of the loosening of relations inside the political-military blocs was an important precondition for the PCI’s entry into government, as an American veto remained one of the main obstacles for PCI government participation. A number of “personal touches” were introduced with regard to détente and anti-imperialism. A quasi-heterodox statement was the positive evaluation of “neutral states” in terms of foreign policy, referring primarily to Yugoslavia. Also new was the emphasis on the demand for the “withdrawal of all foreign bases *across the European continent*” [emphasis added].⁷⁴ This came close to a Maoist interpretation of imperialism—understood as referring to the two superpowers—although the PCI was careful not to make this explicit. Much attention was granted by PCI texts in this period to anti-imperialism and the “national-democratic struggle” in the Third World, always emphasizing the strategic effectiveness of these movements and downplaying the question of their ideological alignment. Here, too, there was subtly expressed disagreement with the Soviets. To the latter, organizational loyalty and ideological alignment to the world communist movement were the main criteria for granting support to these movements, rather than strategic effectiveness or even Marxist orthodoxy.⁷⁵

During the debates inside the PCI preceding the Karlovy Vary Conference in 1966–67, criticism from part of the PCI leadership of the Soviet understanding of peaceful coexistence and détente came to the surface. In reaction to the draft resolutions to the conference, Ingrao wrote an alternative version, in which he strongly advocated the need for European autonomy in the East–West conflict and criticized the way peaceful coexistence was carried out by the socialist states.⁷⁶ In line with WTO policies, the text argued for a strong emphasis on the need for the recognition of the post–Second World War borders and of the GDR, but it was stressed that this was not a conservative or status quo policy. The call for a system of collective security was linked to the unity of an autonomous and continental Europe, which should assume a “new role.” The critique of the Soviet conception of détente was nearly explicit: “The struggle for peaceful coexistence has in recent years not had the necessary development and impulse,

also because it has been understood by part of our forces as a struggle to be carried out essentially by the economic and state initiatives of the socialist countries.”⁷⁷

Expanding the boundaries of socialism also meant expanding the party's international alliances and those of the world communist movement. Next to the creation of a West European communist cluster, the PCI tried out other ways to do this. One of these was its proposal for *allargamento*, or the enlarging of the communist world. *Allargamento* became one of the central claims of the PCI in the communist world. Initially, *allargamento* was a proposal for the inclusion of non-communist groups, such as liberation movements in the Third World, peace organizations and “progressive” movements in civil society, and European socialist and social democratic parties. However, its importance went far beyond the question of who to invite to a conference: it was conceived as a first step in making the world communist movement more pluralist and open, and in expanding its influence in the capitalist world. It was linked to anti-imperialism, as the PCI envisaged in particular co-operation with (non-communist) movements in the Third World. As far as the Mediterranean area was concerned, in 1966 the PCI started a campaign for the convening of a regional conference of “progressive forces” of the Mediterranean.⁷⁸

The PCI's potentially very upsetting, but mostly implicit critique of Soviet foreign policy in the 1960s was its changing attitude vis-à-vis West European integration and the EEC.⁷⁹ Throughout this decade, the PCI shifted from a hostile attitude towards economic and other forms of West European integration, to conditional support of the EEC, which resulted in the entry of a PCI delegation to the European Parliament in 1969.⁸⁰ Although the PCI's international point of reference in the 1960s undoubtedly remained the “socialist camp” rather than Western Europe, the latter sphere started to be an integral part of PCI strategy. An international conference on “Tendencies of European capitalism” in 1965, which followed the above-mentioned conference on Italian capitalism, marked a breakthrough. At this meeting it was argued by CGIL leader B. Trentin that European economic integration had led to an increase in the *real* wages of Italian workers—an affirmation which clearly went counter to the heavily biased opinions expressed on this occasion by the Soviet delegation.⁸¹

These new analyses influenced part of the leadership, in particular CC member G. Amendola. In March 1966 a “Study Centre for European Politics” was created (CESPE), which developed more objective and sophisti-

cated analyses of European affairs. Increasingly, and especially from the 1970s onwards, “Europe” became one of the core points of reference of the PCI’s international outlook and strategy, and a standard element in its rhetoric and political discourses. While the shift towards Europe was primarily a matter of pragmatism and the acceptance of existing situations, there was also an ideological and teleological dimension in the PCI’s European policy. The idea emerged of an enlarged and *socialist* Europe, which should play an autonomous and key role in détente. Through working inside the European institutional framework, the PCI would contribute to making Western Europe socialist. Concretely, however, the “alternative development of democracy” as a strategy for Europe remained vague. At this point only the immediate, “democratic phase” of the strategy was more or less clear: it focused on the democratization of the European institutions, for example through the direct election of the European Parliament.⁸²

There was a close and crucial connection between the PCI’s emerging European strategy and the development of its ideas on détente and peaceful coexistence in Europe. While the thesis of the EEC in origin being a product of the Cold War was maintained, the belief grew now that a “new Europe,” increasingly autonomous from the United States, could be turned into an instrument of European and global détente. Europe, in its continental scope, would be able to contribute to “the overcoming of the blocs.” A strategy similar to the party’s domestic one should be developed on the West European level: a broad mobilization, in the first instance, behind general democratic and anti-monopolistic objectives. In its further implications, this strategy did go counter to Soviet interests as it raised the question of the boundaries of this Europe and the future of the Eastern part of the continent. However, the PCI carefully avoided discussing the exact eastward boundaries of this socialist Europe; this indeed remained the crucial weakness of its European strategy.⁸³ However, this fact, together with its growing insistence on the overcoming of both military-political blocs, seemed to favor the weakening of Soviet dominance over Eastern Europe.

Another important issue on which the PCI (implicitly) disagreed with Soviet foreign policy was the attitude vis-à-vis West Germany. As had become clear at the Karlovy Vary meeting, *Ostpolitik* did not trigger an immediate change in communist bloc strategy towards the FRG. As noted above, in his speech to the conference Longo had hinted at his party’s disagreement with this by emphasizing the strategic changes that were taking place in West Germany and in the SPD. The PCI engaged in direct (though

private) contacts with the SPD, the motives behind this being a complex mix of détente aspirations on the one hand, and old communist diplomacy on the other.⁸⁴ Its motives included: mediating in the improvement of relations between the SPD and the SED; lobbying for the recognition of the Oder–Neisse line by the SPD; and lobbying for the end of the ban on the West German Communist Party. The two first aims were part of a deal concluded with the SED in December 1967: in return for the PCI's mediating efforts, the SED would no longer actively oppose the PCI's contacts with the SPD.⁸⁵ The SPD was motivated, firstly, by a genuine interest in the policies of the reform-minded PCI, in its strategy of *Ostpolitik* as a way to influence the communist world "from below." At the same time, however, the SPD attempted to search the ground for possible contacts with the SED via the PCI.

From September 1967 onwards, CC member S. Segre met on a regular and informal basis with O. Bauer, close collaborator of Brandt. This led in November to a meeting in Rome between an SPD delegation led by E. Francke, and a PCI delegation composed of Berlinguer, his secretary S. Segre, and foreign policy specialist C. Galluzzi.⁸⁶ This policy was a marked victory for the PCI in terms of party autonomy inside the world communist movement. While the non-prohibition of the communist party in West Germany was obtained through these contacts, the much more important issue of East–West German relations remained unresolved. A summit meeting between Berlinguer, Galluzzi and Bauer took place in March 1969, but the results of the endeavor were not entirely satisfactory to any of the parties involved. In the changed conditions of détente after 1968, the SPD no longer considered the PCI useful as a "backdoor" to the East, as it initiated direct contacts with both the Soviet and East German regimes.

4. THE PCF: THE ASYMMETRY OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Between 1962 and 1967, the internationalism of the PCF underwent important and rapid changes. These explain the party's disagreement with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. I will argue here that the conflict between the Soviet and the PCF leaders in the mid-1960s should be understood as a genuine—though mostly disguised—change in the party's inter-

nationalism. Most of the literature has failed, in my view, to notice the gravity of the PCF's conflict with the Kremlin in this phase.⁸⁷ It is this conflict which explains the change in the party's positions on such issues as the world communist conference and West European communist regionalism. This change was the consequence of the French communist leaders' deep dissatisfaction with Soviet international(ist) policies on two major issues. Firstly, the French communist leadership criticized the Soviet leaders for their failure to get a grip on the "centrifugal tendencies" in the communist world and to safeguard "orthodoxy." Secondly, the friendly relations between Brezhnev and de Gaulle made the PCF leadership understand that a divergence of interests had occurred between the CPSU leadership and themselves. This came acutely to the surface on the occasion of the presidential elections of 1965, when the Soviets openly preferred de Gaulle to the Left alliance in which the PCF was involved. The central problem for the PCF in this phase was the asymmetry between, on the one hand, the domestic "détente," a situation in which the party benefited from the decrease of anti-communism and in which it aimed at becoming an actor in the party-political system, and, on the other hand, the conditions of European détente, which showed an incongruence between Soviet strategic priorities and its own domestic strategy.

4.1. *Marxist theory and alliance strategy*

As had been the case in the PCI after 1956, the PCF's new emphasis on communist party autonomy in the world communist movement was, to an important extent, the result of the shift in the party's understanding of its domestic interests. After Thorez's death in the summer of 1964, some of the forces in the party open to change were able to come to the fore. After 1964, important shifts in domestic strategy occurred, as well as a reassessment of the balance between domestic and internationalist interests, giving more weight to the former. The post-1964 leadership, headed by Waldeck Rochet, succeeded in breaking with the party's immobility and political isolation. As has been argued by Kriegel, Rochet, probably partly unconsciously, was engaging in a policy line that had the potential of fundamentally changing the PCF's internationalism, in the priority granted to domestic strategy.⁸⁸ The internal functioning of the party was to some extent democratized, and some elements of collective leadership were introduced. Rochet was assisted by advocates of a gradual and reformist domestic strategy, such as Ch. Fiterman. From the winter of 1966–1967 onwards, J. Kanapa

became very influential.⁸⁹ At the same time, the inner party leadership still counted a number of influential, conservative Thorezains, which Rochet was neither able nor willing to oppose, such as Thorez's widow J. Vermeersch-Thorez and J. Duclos.

The *aggiornamento* of the PCF in this period consisted, firstly, of the initiation of a debate on party theory and interpretations of Marxism, and secondly of the development of the strategy of *Union de la gauche*, the alliance with the Socialist Party. Intense discussions took place after 1964 in and on the fringes of the party on the actualization of Marxist theory. The terms of these debates were set by two groups: on the one hand, those in favor of an "Italian," Gramscian adaptation of Marxism to modern pluralist democracies, and on the other hand, those in favor of a more radically anti-capitalist interpretation of Marxist thought based on structuralism. Roger Garaudy was a leading figure in the first group: he emphasized the humanist elements of Marxism and argued, for example, in favor of finding common ground with religious movements.⁹⁰ Louis Althusser headed the second group; he was the leading PCF intellectual and Marxist theorist at the time, influencing not only communists but a much broader progressive and radical audience in France and abroad. Althusser intended to reconstruct the PCF's ability to present itself as the political subject unifying revolutionary theory and action in a Leninist sense, in a context in which it was exactly this that was contested by an increasing number of radical intellectuals, students and left-wing critics. He did not, however, place the question of a revolutionary strategy in an explicitly international context and only dealt with the PCF's alignment with the Soviet Union after 1969. Nonetheless, his analyses of the state, ideology, education and theory itself were very influential, particularly among radical students and Maoist sympathizers, and came to be an important foundation for post-structuralist thought in the 1970s and later.⁹¹

These intellectual debates took place in a general context of relative intellectual freedom which was unseen in the PCF. It was enhanced by such journals as *Les Lettres fran  aises* and *La Nouvelle critique*, and initiatives such as "Les Semaines de la pens  e marxiste." Nonetheless, the PCF leadership only opened up this intellectual space to then strictly delimit it. The CC meeting held in Argenteuil in 1966 was an attempt by the Rochet leadership, using old Leninist tactics, to create a centrist line between what were defined as the "Right" (Garaudy) and the "Left" (Althusser).⁹² The resolution of the Argenteuil meeting formally recognized the "right to free

creation” inside the party. The result was ambivalent: while, on the one hand, intellectuals genuinely acquired more freedom of thought, on the other hand it signified a certain “retreat from politics” on behalf of the intellectuals. It marked the start of a decline in the influence of intellectuals on party politics.⁹³

Discontent with the “Khrushchevist” shift of the new leadership existed in the entire party apparatus and its affiliated organizations. Generally, the influence of Maoist ideas in and close to the party created a serious threat to “unity.” As was the case in other European communist parties, pro-Chinese groups, with or without active support from Beijing, attempted to create a faction or a dissident party. Chinese and Italian influences at times blended into a powerful critique of the party leadership and its strategy.⁹⁴ Although the critiques departed from ideologically opposed positions—calls for a more radical line on the one hand and calls for integration into the political structures of liberal democracy on the other—what they had in common was strong opposition to the PCF’s continued subordination to Moscow. The leadership, faced with these open expressions of disagreement, felt the need to mark the limits of free debate. This happened through the brutal “realignment” of the youth organization: carried out in 1963–1966, it led to the exclusion of Maoist and Trotskyite groups and “revisionists.”⁹⁵ The price which the PCF had to pay for the ideological cleansing of its youth organization proved high in the longer term. It limited the effects of the intellectual opening-up in and around the party; moreover, the party lost contact with young people and students, a situation that would become painfully clear during the May 1968 events.

Nonetheless, the central party line integrated new analyses of the domestic situation, insofar as these fitted with the basic outline of domestic strategy. The review *Economie et politique*, whose position some years earlier had still been precarious, in 1966 elaborated the “theory of monopoly state capitalism” (*capitalisme monopoliste de l’Etat*, or CME), which was to become the official party analysis of capitalism up to the 1970s. The 18th Party Congress of 1967 adopted this theory, which was new on two points in particular. Firstly, it recognized certain modernizing and growth capacities in capitalism and did away with the theory of absolute impoverishment; secondly, it emphasized the active role of the state in advanced capitalism. The state was understood as being controlled by monopolistic capital, but in itself neutral. Thus, when taken over by a broad alliance of “progressive forces,” it could be democratized.⁹⁶ The CME theory was an elaboration of

the “peaceful road to socialism” and of the older Popular Front strategy. It presented itself as a modernized strategy, was motivated by a wish to operate from the existing institutional framework, and was somewhat influenced by PCI models. Its main contradictions, however, lay in the question of alliances and pluralism. On the one hand, the party now accepted the plurality of parties in the transition to socialism. On the other hand, Rochet maintained that, once socialism was established, the communist and socialist parties should retain a “special function” and other parties would only be allowed if they “respect socialist legality.”⁹⁷ While the PCI already in 1956 foresaw the possibility of “roads to socialism” in which the communist party would not take the leading role, to the PCF pluralism was a less important value *per se*.

The basic choice which the PCF made in this period was similar to the one made by the PCI, insofar as it was a choice for further integration into the parliamentary system and mainstream politics. The PCF, in a more straightforward way than the PCI, opted for an alliance with the Socialist Party. The first contacts between the PCF and the SFIO had already occurred in 1963, without mounting to an agreement. The main obstacle was that the SFIO aimed at organic unity, which the PCF refused. Instead, election alliances on the local level occurred during the following years. A strategic shift in French socialism occurred in the mid-1960s, away from the centrist option and towards a left alliance. The attempts by G. Defferre to bring about a centre-left alliance, excluding the communists, failed in mid-1965, especially because of obstruction by the SFIO and its leader G. Mollet. The latter then merged with the Radical Party, the republicans of the CIR, and a number of socialist “clubs,” into the Fédération de la Gauche démocratique et socialiste (FGDS), headed by F. Mitterrand. Mitterrand presented the FGDS as a clear break with the past, as more to the left than Defferre, and more “modern” than Mollet and the old guard of the SFIO. Although he was contested in this, Mitterrand was resolutely in favor of an alliance with the communists. In terms of foreign relations, Mitterrand was a supporter of the Atlantic alliance.⁹⁸

The great breakthrough in communist–socialist relations came in the summer of 1965, when Waldeck Rochet, in what was a highly personal decision, announced that the PCF would support the socialist candidate Mitterrand in the upcoming presidential elections. Rochet had gradually and secretly been intensifying his contacts with Mitterrand. The PCF leadership considered Mitterrand as a suitable ally, not only for the reasons mentioned

above but also, tactically, because he lacked the kind of support from the party apparatus that Mollet had enjoyed. Indeed, Rochet stated quite explicitly that the goal of the alliance was to reinforce the party's position on the Left.⁹⁹ Tactical motivations notwithstanding, the Rochet leadership was strongly committed to the unitary strategy. It was ready for far-reaching compromise and entered into the alliance without having negotiated a common program, which Mitterrand had refused.¹⁰⁰ The outcome was a success: while in the first round of the December 1965 elections Mitterrand obtained 32 per cent, in the second round he lost to de Gaulle, but only just, obtaining 45 per cent. The outcome was highly significant: it raised the perspective of the victory of the Left alliance, and it destabilized de Gaulle's stature as the incarnation of national unity.¹⁰¹

At this point the PCF leadership felt how problematic the party's ties with the Soviet Union were in strategic terms, as the latter apparently no longer supported a fairly "orthodox" and potentially successful domestic strategy. Moscow, in reaction to Mitterrand's pro-NATO stance, openly supported de Gaulle during the presidential campaign of 1965. At the peak of the election campaign, *Pravda* published a series of articles supporting de Gaulle's foreign policy, while omitting any reference to the PCF and its domestic strategy. Moreover, the press agency TASS published a statement of support for de Gaulle. This was an extremely bitter pill to swallow for the French communists. In an unusual, and in intra-communist relations very meaningful, reaction, a *Humanité* commentary objected to the "interpretation of the domestic problems in France by a *foreign* agency" [emphasis added]. More explicit objections to the TASS communiqué were debated by the PCF leadership but rejected.¹⁰² Despite clear signals of Soviet disagreement, the PCF in 1966–1967 continued its *Union de la gauche* strategy. Regular discussions took place on a high level, and working groups were established which more concretely discussed the program for socialism in France. In October 1967, a draft common program was issued. Foreign policy, an area of disagreement, was also discussed. While strongly diverging positions existed on Algeria, Vietnam and the Middle East, a limited convergence took place with regard to European matters. The PCF by now accepted the existence of the EEC, and the FGDS wished to make Western Europe, both in economic and political terms, more independent from the United States. Both parties declared themselves against supra-nationality and envisaged an integrated Europe with elements of a planned economy.¹⁰³

In the multiple disagreements that existed in the world communist mov-

ement at this point, the PCF's domestic strategy was valued differently in different East European capitals. As K. Bartošek has illustrated, Prague in 1965–1967 not only took on a different attitude from Moscow vis-à-vis the *Union de la gauche* in France but actively stimulated its development. During these years, a series of top-level talks took place between the Czechoslovak Communist Party on the one hand, and the French socialists on the other. This was preceded by a trip by Waldeck Rochet to Prague in 1965, where he discussed the party's domestic unionist strategy. In October 1966, an SFIO delegation led by Mollet visited Prague, followed by an FGDS delegation led by Mitterrand in November 1967.¹⁰⁴ The episode demonstrates the efforts that the PCF undertook to make its *Union de la gauche* policy acceptable to its East European "brother parties." By involving the CPCS in its domestic strategy, the PCF hoped, firstly, that Mollet and Mitterrand would become acceptable to its "brother parties." Furthermore, the attempt was to influence the FGDS leaders, in particular on foreign policy matters, which remained the crucial area of disagreement. As to the motivations of the SFIO and the FGDS, it is clear how strong the need was to develop an *Ostpolitik*, as the socialists were on this issue challenged by both the communists and the Right. The positions of the CPCS and FGDS seemed indeed to converge, at least on paper, on a number of issues of international politics, such as security in Europe, a "European solution" for Germany as an alternative to an "America-dominated" West Germany, and the peaceful transition to socialism in France.¹⁰⁵

Besides the CPCS, the East German SED also seemed particularly interested in the French Union of the Left. Although it is not clear whether there were direct contacts between the SED and the SFIO or FGDS, the French communists regularly reported to their East German comrades on the proceedings of their domestic negotiations. The specific interest of the SED was obviously the "German question." The SED displayed a remarkable readiness to perceive the positive aspects of the French socialists' position on this issue. In an SED report of 1967 it was noted that, although the FGDS still envisaged German reunification in the longer term (which was obviously considered as negative), Mitterrand was personally in favor of French diplomatic recognition of the GDR. This implied that the Left alliance in France would be more attractive to East Germany than de Gaulle was.¹⁰⁶ The remarkable attitudes of the otherwise very Soviet-loyal East German and Czechoslovak communists on the issue show just how

disputed Soviet leadership over the communist world had become. It seems that in their analysis of the French Left alliance the SED and the CPCS were ready to let their countries' own national strategic interests (particularly with regard to a possible settlement of the German question) prevail over discipline with respect to Moscow.

Gaullist détente strategy provoked an impasse for the PCF in another way. In its domestic environment the PCF was less pressured than the PCI to weaken its symbolic and discursive relations with the communist world and the Soviet Union. Generally, in France at the time a sort of “rush to the East” took place: friendly relations with the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe were considered to be in the interests of the nation and its sovereignty, as they provided France with a more independent position vis-à-vis the Western alliance. More generally, as the party's links to the Soviet Union had always been a source of domestic legitimation, there was little interest for the PCF in publicizing its conflict with the Kremlin. While the PCF leadership increasingly considered the strategic dimension of its relations with the Soviet Union to be problematical, this could not lead to a dramatic revision of its internationalism, as the situation was one of deadlock. The PCF's conflict between domestic strategy and internationalist loyalty could not lead to a further increased emphasis on the former, because it was considered to be in the interests of domestic appeal and domestic legitimation, as well as party unity, to maintain links with the Soviet Union.

4.2. *The conflict with the Kremlin and the concept of internationalism*

The PCF positions on the organization of the communist world and its attitudes towards the Soviet Union in this phase were marked by contradictions. While, on the one hand, in the context of the world communist movement the party continued to be the staunchest defender of “orthodoxy” and “unity” and remained opposed to change, on the other hand it suddenly shifted to the advocacy of a degree of party autonomy, and on some issues allied with the PCI against the Soviet Union. However, the rationale behind this apparently contradictory attitude was a disconnection between, on the one hand, the PCF's *own* vision of internationalism, including a cohesive communist world led by strong Soviet leadership and respect for (Leninist) “orthodoxy,” and, on the other hand, its negative appreciation of actual Soviet leadership over the movement and its strategy towards the West. Most of this, however, took place as a hidden development, which

gave proof of the party's continued inability openly to distance itself from the Soviet Union on significant matters.

The first expressions of criticism of Soviet leaders by the PCF, in veiled terms and behind closed doors, occurred before the 1965 conflict over domestic strategy, and were to do with dissatisfaction with the ways in which the Soviets dealt with the crisis in the world communist movement. Apart from the disagreement with the Soviets on the issue of the world conference of communist parties discussed above, the PCF, like the PCI, sent a delegation to Moscow following Khrushchev's downfall in the autumn of 1964. Their request for further explanation gave proof of the increased self-confidence of both parties vis-à-vis a weakened Soviet authority.¹⁰⁷ But, once more, their motivations for doing so differed radically. While the PCI wished to find out whether the power change would not disrupt the de-Stalinization course, the PCF was keen to ensure that Khrushchev's anti-Maoist campaign would be continued. As anti-Maoism had been, ultimately, the issue on which the PCF had accepted Khrushchevism, the PCF now felt that it should object to the fall of the leader who had personified anti-Maoism.¹⁰⁸

In its conception of the world communist movement, doctrinal uniformity and tight cohesiveness were more important than geographical scope or strategic potential. In terms of doctrine, it continued to condemn "revisionism" and did not change its basically negative portrayal of the PCI's strategies, despite its tactical shift towards the PCI.¹⁰⁹ With regard to "dogmatism," the PCF opposed Sino-Soviet negotiations. As Fejtő has argued, there was a point at which the PCF leadership would have subordinated its traditional loyalty to Soviet policy to its own vision of the coherence of world communism in doctrinal and organizational terms.¹¹⁰ In its ideal-vision of the world communist movement, unity would come about on the basis of egalitarian relations between communist parties, and, as was said in the Bureau politique in late 1967, not on the basis of "one or more leading centers." This was a—private and cautious—questioning of Soviet leadership over the movement.¹¹¹

Furthermore, the PCF's position on the crisis inside the world communist movement and its critique of the Soviet Union were very clearly expressed on the occasion of its refusal to co-operate in the preparations for a planned "world meeting of writers" in 1965. The meeting, as proposed in January 1965 by the East German SED and probably supported by the CPSU, would convene communist writers in Berlin and Weimar. While the PCF's refusal

in itself was not strictly new in these matters, the argumentation which they put forward demonstrated a greater assertiveness regarding the party's own interests, and a readiness openly to talk about (and exploit) divergences. As the SED delegate reported: "The PCF is opposed to the project, on the one hand because a broad attendance of parties cannot be guaranteed, and on the other hand because all the present divergences on issues of cultural policy will come to the surface. The PCF considers that this is not useful for the present struggle of the West European brother parties."¹¹²

The party's first, limited, criticism of the Soviet Union as a regime was expressed in this period. Following the study trip to the Soviet Union by a PCF delegation sent by the Bureau politique, a report was sent to the members of this body, which included remarkably negative elements. Points of criticism were the organization of the economy, the election system and the absence of different candidates for elections ("we can ask ourselves whether our comrades should not be a little more vigilant on this issue"), and the minimal role of parliament. It was concluded that, given the "lack of parliamentary traditions such as the French one," the political problems in the Soviet Union should not be exported to France. This was similar to the type of relative criticism of the Soviet Union that could be heard in the PCI since 1956. This type of criticism, however, was not made public to the wider party.¹¹³

Besides the private complaints addressed to the Soviet leadership, the PCF leadership suggested its distancing from the latter by not objecting to open support for Soviet dissidents by PCF intellectuals and *compagnons de route* and by not calling them to order. In February 1966 *Humanité* published an article by the influential party intellectual and Marxist theorist L. Aragon, which criticized the condemnation to work-camp labor of the writers I. Daniel and A. Siniavski by the Soviet authorities. Although Aragon made sure carefully to balance this with an appraisal of the Soviet system as a whole, his support of these dissidents was highly significant and unusual in PCF history.¹¹⁴ While in neither case the party leadership took an official position, the fact that it was willing to provide the critical intellectuals with a forum was telling of the (modest) changes its internationalism had undergone over the past years.

Furthermore, while officially supportive of the Soviet strategies of peaceful coexistence and European security, the public and private insistence on the "orthodoxy" of peaceful coexistence, and on its offensive rather than defensive nature, suggests that there were difficulties in convincing the party of the benefits of peaceful coexistence. For example, in a report draft-

ed by J. Gacon for the Foreign Policy Section in early 1967, it was emphasized that peaceful coexistence was “an authentic Leninist concept and not a Khrushchevite invention.”¹¹⁵ However damaging Soviet détente strategy proved to be to the PCF’s domestic strategy, a criticism of peaceful coexistence and détente could not be made, as this would re-enforce Maoist criticism of the Soviet Union.

NOTES

- 1 A monograph exists on the Sino–Soviet conflict and West European communism: Timmermann, *The Decline of the World Communist Movement*. However, it fails in my view to grasp the complexities of the challenge posed by the Sino–Soviet rift to West European communism. Older, but still very useful, is Griffith, “European Communism and the Sino–Soviet Rift,” in Griffith, *Communism in Europe*, vol. 1.
- 2 On the Sino–Soviet conflict generally, see Westad, *Brothers in Arms*.
- 3 Legvold, “The Soviet Union,” p. 315.
- 4 The increase in this share was higher than the increase in funding to African, Asian and Latin American parties. Only from 1963 onwards did a small shift towards Africa and Asia occur. Riva, *Oro da Mosca*, pp. 46–65 and 239–240.
- 5 In the West, only the Dutch Communist Party (CPN) broke its ties with the Soviet Union in a clear-cut way over the Sino–Soviet rift. Timmerman, *The Decline of the World Communist Movement*, pp. 46–51.
- 6 The domestic position of the smaller parties was severely damaged by Maoist schisms and/or exclusions. More or less important Maoist groups were excluded from or left the communist party in Switzerland and Austria (1963), Spain (1964), the Netherlands and Portugal. Lazar, “Unité et crises,” p. 38.
- 7 For more detail on the conference proceedings and the positions of the PCI and PCF, see Fejtő, *The French Communist Party*, pp. 116–125; and Griffith, “The diplomacy of Eurocommunism,” p. 401.
- 8 According to Griffith, the Italian–Romanian alliance was effective not only in blocking the conference plan, but also in making Moscow temporarily cease its open polemics with China. Griffith, “The diplomacy of Eurocommunism,” pp. 402–403.
- 9 Luigi Longo was general secretary of the PCI from 1964 to 1972. He was a former resistance leader and had been known, in the post-war period, as a rival of Togliatti. Biographical information on Longo can be found in the various contributions to Vacca, *Luigi Longo*.
- 10 See also Kriegel, “The International Role,” pp. 46–47.
- 11 Interview with Longo in *L’Express*, Paris, 2/11/64. Quoted in Devlin, “The Role of the Non-ruling Communist Parties,” pp. 26–27.
- 12 Griffith, “The diplomacy of Eurocommunism,” pp. 404–405. Devlin, “The Role of the Non-ruling Communist Parties,” p. 27.

- 13 Griffith, "The diplomacy of Eurocommunism," p. 404.
- 14 Decisions of the Central Committee meeting, 7–9/7/1965. Published in *Unità*, 10/7/1965.
- 15 According to what Moretti, an influential PCI representative in Prague, told the SED, Longo did so, for example, on the occasion of his meeting in Prague with CPCS leaders on 16 and 17 November 1965. "Aussprache des Gen. Dr. Neubert, Mitarbeiter der Abt. Internationale Verbindungen beim ZK, mit den Gen. Moretti (Moranino), Leiter des Bueros der Kommunistischen Partei Italiens in Prag, am 24 November 1965," Berlin, 25/11/1965, Neubert, 4 pages dact. *Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv* (SAPMDB), *Zentrales Parteiarhiv SED* (ZPA-SED), DY 30/IV A 2/20, 504.
- 16 There is no study of PCI positions regarding Third World struggles. Some useful information on PCI–Soviet tension on this issue can be found in Griffith, *Sino–Soviet relations*, chapter 2.
- 17 The PCF's shift towards tactically opposing the conference is not mentioned in Kriegel, "The International Role," pp. 46–47. I am in disagreement with Kriegel's argument that the PCF at this point no longer favoured a monolithic WCM.
- 18 Letter from Guyot to Suslov, 28/2/65, in APCF, Fund Fajon, box 11 "International," folder 1.
- 19 Both parties continued to oppose the conference plan up to early 1968. For an overview of the positions of the West European parties on the issue around 1967, see "Sulla conferenza internazionale dei partiti comunisti ed operai," Roma, 25/1/67, s.n. (but most probably Berlinguer), in APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 35.2. For an outline of the Italian position on the Chinese question see "Nota Berlinguer," 18/2/67, APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 35.1.
- 20 For a similar view of the emergence of a West European "pressure group" inside the WCM in the mid-1960s, see Fejtő, *L'héritage de Lenine*, p. 339.
- 21 For example Devlin, "The Role of the Non-ruling Communist Parties."
- 22 There had been a first West European communist conference in 1959 in Rome, which did, however, lead to an autonomist movement.
- 23 "Notes CC d'avril: points de désaccord avec Longo," ms., s.n. (but probably Waldeck Rochet), s.d. (but probably early 1966). APCF, Fund "Waldeck Rochet – Provenance Secrétariat Marchais," box 27, folder 4. It was noted here that there were "positive and negative aspects" in PCI policies; with regard to foreign policy "they [the Italians –mb] pose fewer questions [than we do –mb] on NATO and other difficult matters."
- 24 Final resolutions of the Brussels meeting, in Timmerman, H. "Moskau und die Westkommunisten: von Breshnew zu Gorbatschow," in *Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien*. 1989, nr. 3.
- 25 Report of the Roasio-Grund meeting of 18/5/65, in: SAPMDB, ZPA-SED, DY 30/3521 ("Büro Ulbricht").
- 26 APCF, BP, 24/4/65.
- 27 Honecker asked the organizing Belgian Communist Party if he could send an "observer" to the Brussels meeting. The West German KPD (no doubt under SED pressure) proposed inviting the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutsch-

- lands—Westberlin. The first proposal was rejected, the second accepted. "Information," 5/12/1964, 4 p. dact., in ASPMDB, ZPA-SED, DY 30/IV A2/20, 462.
- 28 "Berlin, 4/2/67. Bericht über den Aufenthalt einer Delegation des ZK in der DDR in der Zeit 11–13/1/67," in ASPMNB, ZPA-SED, DY 30/IV, A2/20, 505.
- 29 As Jacques Denis, member of the Bureau politique, told SED leaders in January 1967. "Vermerk über ein Gespräch des Gen. Hermann Axen mit Gen. Jacques Denis, am 30. Januar 1967," 3 pages dact., in SAPMDB, ZPA-SED, DY/30/IV A 2/20, 457, p. 3.
- 30 APCF, BP, 24/2/65.
- 31 APCF, BP, 11/3/65.
- 32 "The regional conference will contribute to the preparation of the Conference on European Security," APCF, BP, 18/5/66.
- 33 "Vermerk über ein Gespräch des Gen. Hermann Axen mit Gen. Jacques Denis, am 30. Januar 1967," 3 pages dact., in SAPMDB, ZPA-SED, DY/30/IV A 2/20, 457, p. 3.
- 34 On the coming about of détente after 1962, and American, Soviet, French and West German motives in this, see Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, pp. 3–23. For an emphasis on the "strains of nuclear destruction," see Suri, *Power and Protest*, pp. 7–43.
- 35 See Edmonds' discussion of the "four basic tasks for Soviet foreign policy," formulated at the 23rd CPSU Congress in 1966. Edmonds, *Soviet Foreign Policy*, pp. 8–16. On the Soviet concept of détente see, especially, Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, pp. 36–52. As for the terminology, in Soviet/communist official documents, peaceful coexistence was the term most often used, referring to the *policy*. Détente was increasingly used in the second half of the 1960s and referred to the *outcome*. Light, *The Soviet Theory*, p. 63.
- 36 Gaiduk, *The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War*, esp. chapters 4 and 5.
- 37 For a similar interpretation see Duhamel, *Les Soviétiques et les voies de la révolution*, pp. 222–228.
- 38 Rey, *Le dilemme russe*, pp. 311–313.
- 39 For a discussion of the complex intra-communist tensions on security policy in this period see, especially, Selvage, "The Warsaw Pact and Nuclear Non-Proliferation."
- 40 For similar view on West German motives behind early *Ostpolitik*, see Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, pp. 54–57. On the Soviets and *Ostpolitik*, see Sodaro, *Moscow, Germany and the West*. On East German responses, see Sarotte, *Dealing with the Devil*.
- 41 Since 1957, Polish foreign minister Rapacki had been pressuring towards disarmament talks, linking this to the acceptance in the West of the territorial status quo. For more detail on the Rapacki plans see Erickson, "The Soviet Union and European détente," in Dyson, *European détente*, pp. 172–194, at 174–178.
- 42 The resolutions of the Karlovy Vary Conference can be found in (CPSU, ed.) *Pour la paix, la tranquillité, le bonheur des peuples d'Europe*. For a discussion of Karlovy Vary from the military policy perspective, see Erickson, "The Soviet Union and European détente," pp. 177–179.

- 43 For a similar view see Legvold, "The Soviet Union," pp. 317–329.
- 44 Legvold, "The Soviet Union," pp. 315–317. There is, of course, a broader historical and political debate on whether the Soviet Union at any point after 1948 favoured revolution in Western Europe. The relevant point here is that Soviet non-support for a Communist takeover in the West had since the start of the Cold War not yet become as explicit as in France in 1965.
- 45 In 1964–1967 it remained at about \$ 10,200,000 for Europe. Instead, the funding of the Latin American and African parties increased, though not significantly. Riva, *Oro da Mosca*, pp. 45–67 and 306–307.
- 46 It was also intended by the Soviets as an intra-communist preparation for the envisaged pan-European conference on security. Albania, Romanian and Yugoslavia boycotted the conference, as did the parties of Iceland and Norway.
- 47 Enrico Berlinguer, future general secretary of the PCI, was at this point a Direzione member. During the 1960s he became increasingly influential in international affairs. He had been a leader of the World Federation of Democratic Youth. For a biographic account of Berlinguer see Fiori, *Vita di Enrico Berlinguer*.
- 48 "Incontro Kliszko 9/10/67," hand-written report of the meeting by Berlinguer, in APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 41.1.
- 49 In October 1965, the French Bureau politique decided to "investigate the idea" for the conference. This usually meant they would present the project to the Soviet leaders. Some days later, in a talk with R. Guyot, responsible for foreign affairs in the BP, Ponomariov agreed to the schedule proposed by the former and to the official launching of the idea, which happened at the PCF's national congress in Lavallois in late 1965. APCF, BP, 26/10/65 and 28/10/65.
- 50 The PCF protested against this privately. APCF, BP, 11/5/67.
- 51 APCF, BP, 6/4/67. Galluzzi, *La svolta*, pp. 150–152.
- 52 For more on the crisis of Atlanticism with emphasis on the economic base, see Kaldor, *The Imaginary War*, part II.
- 53 On French–American relations in this period, see, for example, Paxton, Wahl, *De Gaulle and the United States*, chapter 4.
- 54 Against de Gaulle's expectations, the Soviet Union reacted very negatively to the French–West German treaty. On Gaullist policy vis-à-vis Eastern Europe in this period, see Rey, *La tentation du rapprochement*, esp. pp. 277–284. On de Gaulle and the German question generally, see Maillard, *De Gaulle et le problème allemand*; and Soutou, *L'alliance incertaine*.
- 55 Among the many publications on the crisis in NATO and the EEC in the 1960s, see, for example, Lundestad, "Empire" by *Integration*, chapter 6.
- 56 More detail on the PCI as an organization and a subculture in this period can be found in Sani, "Italy: the changing role of the Italian communist party," in Albright, *Communism and Political systems in Western Europe*, pp. 54–57; and Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia*, pp. 393–403.
- 57 On the coming about of the *centro-sinistra* see Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia*, pp. 362–382; Mammarella, *L'Italia contemporanea*, chapter 3.
- 58 Flores, De Bernardi, *Il sessantotto*, p. 156.

- 59 For more on the debates in the PSI on the eve of its entry into government see Degl'Innocenti, *Storia del PSI. Vol. III*, chapter 3.
- 60 About 20 per cent of the PSI's members followed Basso into the PSIUP, as did 38 MPs of the PSI and the bulk of the socialist leadership of the CGIL. Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia*, p. 371.
- 61 Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia*, pp. 373–378.
- 62 Another source of minor irritation was the removal by the Americans of their Jupiter Missiles from Italy in 1963. On Italian-American relations in the 1960s see Nuti, *Gli Stati Uniti*, esp. pp. 38–57.
- 63 Gualtieri, "Il PCI, la DC e il vincolo esterno," pp. 69–70.
- 64 Pietro Ingrao had been a member of the PCI since 1941 and an MP since 1948. Among the many accounts of the Ingrao–Amendola dispute, see two recent, archive-based analyses: Ragusa, *I comunisti e la società italiana*, pp. 106–115; and Taviani, "L'impossibilità di un riformismo borghese?," pp. 299–323. See, furthermore, Mammarella, *Il partito comunista italiano*, pp. 143–147; Sassoon, *The strategy of the Italian Communist Party*, pp. 221–228.
- 65 Ragusa, *I comunisti*, pp. 108–109.
- 66 An analysis of *ingraoism*, its bases of support and its eventual defeat in this period, can be found in Amyot, *The Italian Communist Party*, esp. pp. 155–169. According to Amyot, the *ingraiani* were openly in the majority in some federations, and nationwide around 15 to 20 per cent of the active members were supporters of the Left.
- 67 The stagnation of the PCI in this phase has been argued, for example, in Tranfaglia, "Socialisti e comunisti nell'Italia repubblicana," pp. 499–511.
- 68 After this, a purge took place inside the party, through which a number of federation and local leaders who had expressed support for Ingrao were eliminated. See Amyot, *The Italian Communist Party*, p. 169.
- 69 Taviani, "L'impossibilità di un riformismo borghese?," pp. 311–312.
- 70 This is argued, for example, in Tranfaglia, "Socialisti e comunisti nell'Italia repubblicana," pp. 499–511.
- 71 Immediately after Togliatti's death, the new leadership (future general secretary L. Longo in particular) decided to publish the "Yalta Memorandum" in the party press. The full text is published in Togliatti, *Opere scelte*, pp. 1170–1181.
- 72 The insistence on the unity of the WCM in the late writings of Togliatti has become clear recently from archival research. See Pons, "L'URSS e il PCI," p. 27.
- 73 The resolutions of the 10th National Congress are published in (PCI, ed.) *Documenti politici dal X al XI Congresso*.
- 74 Sassoon, *The Strategy*, pp. 209–211. Although this last slogan was not new and had been part of PCI propaganda since the 1950s, the emphasis on it was striking.
- 75 Older, but still highly useful on this, is Griffith, *Sino-Soviet relations*, chapters 2 and 8.
- 76 It is not clear what the reactions were to this report in the wider PCI leadership. According to Galluzzi, there was no time to propose this alternative version to the conference, but the amendments proposed by the PCI to the resolutions (see

- above) were based on this text. “Nota per la conferenza sulla sicurezza europea. Commenti Pietro Ingrao sul progetto,” 18/7/67, in APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 35.3.
- 77 “Nota per la conferenza sulla sicurezza europea. Commenti Pietro Ingrao sul progetto,” 18/7/67, in APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 35.3.
- 78 A first preparatory meeting took place in Rome in January 1968, which was attended by, among others, the PCF, the Algerian FLN, the Yugoslav League of Communists, the Greek AKEL, the PCE, and non-communist groups and parties from Morocco, Turkey and Iraq. PCF reluctance to co-operate with the FLN, however, remained an obstacle for this type of convergence. The resolutions of the meeting can be found in “Documento interno approvato nella riunione preparativa della conferenza delle forze progressive del mediterraneo. Roma, 22–23 gennaio 1968,” in APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 41.2.
- 79 On the PCI and Europe see, essentially, Maggiorani, *L’Europa degli altri*, chapters 5 and 6.
- 80 Although the PSI’s support of the PCI in this respect was important, the former party did not go as far as to make its support of Italian ratification of the Rome Treaties dependent on communist inclusion in the Italian delegation in Strasburg, as Galluzzi requested. The Rome Treaties were ratified by the Italian Parliament in November 1965, with the support of the PSI; the PCI and the PSIUP voted against. Maggiorani, *L’Europa degli altri*, pp. 232–239.
- 81 From 1965 onwards the CGIL openly started to criticize the Soviet and PCI theses on the crisis of capitalism. On the European positions of the CGIL in European affairs and its influence on the PCI leadership, see Maggiorani, *L’Europa degli altri*, pp. 227–232.
- 82 Maggiorani, *L’Europa degli altri*, pp. 212–233.
- 83 See also Maggiorani, *L’Europa degli altri*, pp. 303–304.
- 84 On the PCI and the SPD see, especially, the many publications by H. Timmermann, for example Timmerman, “Im Vorfeld der Neuen Ostpolitik.” See also Galluzzi, *La svolta*, pp. 171–185. However, while Timmerman has, in my view, overestimated the strategic importance of these contacts to détente in Europe, Galluzzi has exaggerated the antagonism between the PCI and the SED on this issue.
- 85 This happened at a meeting between the PCI and the SED in December 1967. Galluzzi, *La svolta*, pp. 175–178.
- 86 Carlo Galluzzi was at the time head of the Foreign Affairs Section of the Central Committee, and was known as an advocate of cautious reform.
- 87 Lavau, for example, has only noted “little enthusiasm” for the Soviet policies by the PCF in this period. Lavau, “L’URSS et eux...,” pp. 202–203.
- 88 Kriegel, “The PCF and the Fifth Republic,” p. 76. Waldeck Rochet was general secretary between 1964 and, officially, 1972. Before, he had been responsible for agricultural policy. He had profiled himself since 1956 as an advocate of change. See the biography: Vigreux, *Waldeck Rochet*.
- 89 Furthermore, a more general rejuvenation of the party leadership occurred after 1964: half of the Central Committee members were replaced in the space of three years. Vigreux, *Waldeck Rochet*, pp. 111–220. Biographical information on Jean Kanapa can be found in Streiff, *Kanapa*.

- 90 Vigreux, *Waldeck Rochet*, p. 215.
- 91 More on Althusser's thought and his situation on the French Left at the time in Khilnani, *Arguing revolution*, chapter 4.
- 92 Rochet is to have admitted to Althusser later on that the party needed to criticize him in order to be able to criticize Garaudy. Vigreux, *Waldeck Rochet*, p. 217. For more on the Argenteuil meeting see Khilnani, *Arguing revolution*, pp. 105–111.
- 93 Verdès-Leroux, *Le réveil des somnambules*, passim.
- 93 Verdès-Leroux, *Le réveil des somnambules*, passim.
- 94 For more detail on the "French Chinese" see Fejtő, *The French Communist Party*, pp. 149–154.
- 95 The continued crisis in the UEC throughout 1963–1967 was connected to internal party matters, as the different tendencies in the UEC were allied to tendencies in the party. The UEC in 1963 was dominated by an "Italian" tendency, which outnumbered the party-allied "orthodox" tendency. Moreover, Trotskyite, Castrist, and increasingly Maoist ideas were influential. The party leadership gradually re-established control over the UEC by using the old Leninist tactic of infiltration and alliance building. For more detail on the UEC crisis see Dreyfus, *PCF. Crises et dissidences*, pp. 141–153.
- 96 Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, pp. 124–126.
- 97 Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 474.
- 98 For more detail see Kergoat, *Histoire du Parti socialiste*, pp. 144–151.
- 99 For more on Rochet's motivations see Vigreux, *Waldeck Rochet*, pp. 234–236.
- 100 There had been a first electoral alliance in March 1965 for the city council elections. Courtois, Lazar, *Histoire du PCF*, p. 320.
- 101 Bell, Criddle, *The French Socialist Party*, p. 45.
- 102 The sense of frustration only increased when, on the occasion of the 23rd Party Congress of the CPSU in Moscow in 1966, the Soviets unanimously cheered the name of de Gaulle, while Rochet, in his speech, had carefully avoided mentioning the president's name. Fejtő, *The French Communist Party*, p. 200.
- 103 Streiff, *Kanapa*, pp. 274–280.
- 104 In the same year, a delegation of the PCF, led by Thorez-Vermeersch and composed mostly of Soviet-loyalists, did the same. There were antecedents: while in 1956 Jacques Duclos had expressed the wish in Prague that the CPCS could "help the PCF in establishing relations with the socialists," Roger Garaudy two years later had formulated a similar request. Bartošek, *Paris–Prague*, pp. 177–180.
- 105 Mollet furthermore argued that the PCF should abandon its "complex of solidarity" with Moscow. Bartošek, *Paris–Prague*, pp. 178–182.
- 106 "Die FGDS und die Deutschlandfrage," in *Misterium fuer Auswärtiges Amt (Berlin)*, *Politisches Archiv*, MfAA, B. 24, Bd. 606. This was not, however, the official position of the FGDS.
- 107 Fejtő, *The French Communist Party*, p. 190.
- 108 Moreover, it seems that sharp discontent was expressed in the middle and lower echelons against the fall of Khrushchev. Fejtő, *The French Communist Party*, p. 193.

- 109 According to Bartošek, nothing on the PCI was published in *Humanité* without the agreement of the Central Committee. Bartošek, *Paris–Prague*, p. 175.
- 110 According to Fejtő, Waldeck Rochet said at a meeting with Chinese leader Chou-En Lai in November 1964 that, in the event of a Soviet truce with China, the PCF would not go along. Fejtő, *The French Communist Party*, p. 192.
- 111 APCF, BP, 14/12/67.
- 112 “Abteilung Kultur, Internationale Verbindungen, 12/1/1965,” in SAPMDB, ZPA-SED, DY 30/IV A 2/20, 457.
- 113 “23/6/67. Aux membres du BP. Info suite à la délégation d’étude du Parti en Union soviétique,” G. Plissonnier, in APCF, Fund “Waldeck Rochet –Provenance Sec. Marchais,” box 8 “1967 (fin).” All the critical passages in this document were omitted from the report that was sent to the Central Committee. “3/7/67. Envoi par Roland Leroy d’un texte de la délégation d’études du Parti en URSS. Aux membres du CC” (same location).
- 114 Courtois, Lazar, *Histoire du PCF*, pp. 328–329.
- 115 “La diplomatie soviétique et sa lutte pour la sécurité collective. Rapport présenté à la Section de politique extérieure le 17/3/67 par Jean Gacon,” in APCF, Fund Fajon, box 10 “International—URSS.”

CONCLUSIONS TO PART I.

On the eve of 1968, both the PCI and PCF experienced a highly problematic relationship with the world communist movement, and in particular with the Soviet Union. In 1956 the PCI had started questioning the organization and modes of operation in the communist world through the concept of (minimal) polycentrism. This led it, in the 1960s, to expand its internationalism, in the sense of widening its alliances on the international level (Europe and the Mediterranean). Moreover, 1956 marked the start of the questioning of the value of the Soviet Union as a model for socialism. The PCI's implicit move away from "orthodoxy" in this regard was evident from a combination of elements: its analyses of capitalism, its domestic strategy, and the implications of its European strategy. The limits of this development, however, lay in the fact that the PCI, between 1957 and 1968, did not develop a systematic critique of the socialist regimes and did not link this to the type of socialism that would come about in Italy.

The dramatic changes undergone by the PCI's internationalism, in contrast to the PCF's continued resistance to change, should be understood as a result of the domestic situation of these parties in interplay with the international position of their country in the East–West conflict. In the case of the PCI, symmetry occurred between the evolution of its domestic position and its outlook on the evolution of the East–West conflict and global strategy. The political situation in Italy from the early 1960s onwards resembled a "domestic détente," which created the possibility for the PCI to escape its domestic isolation. From the PCI perspective, a similar development needed to take place on the European and global level. European détente and global anti-imperialism would create the conditions in which Western countries such as Italy could become socialist. In this sense, WCM strategy, based in this phase on European détente and global anti-imperialism, was highly supportive of PCI strategy. This explains the absence of an acute conflict between the PCI and the Soviet Union in this phase.

It is the PCF case which demonstrates the new problems created to West European communism by détente, and this because France, unlike Italy, was a major actor in European détente. In the case of the PCF, an asymmetry existed between the domestic evolution, by which the party partly succeeded in escaping its political isolation, and the development towards European détente, in which Gaullist France played a major role. In the first instance, the Soviet–French rapprochement helped the PCF to improve its domestic position by, to some extent, legitimizing its anti-NATO and philo-Soviet positions. However, the impasse which the Soviet–French rapprochement caused became sharply clear when, in the presidential election campaign of 1965, the Kremlin openly supported de Gaulle rather than the socialist candidate to who the PCF was allied in the frame of its *Union de la gauche* strategy. The uncertainty which this created regarding Soviet support for socialism in the West followed the party's older suspicions about peaceful coexistence not being an "orthodox" strategy.

CHAPTER 4.
*West European Communism and the
Prague Spring: reform and détente*

*“The world, divided between neo-capitalists
and neo-Stalinists, risks one day to be upset
by this—and in a good way”¹*

This chapter looks at the reactions to the Prague Spring, prior to the invasion, by the PCI and the PCF publicly and by their leadership internally. The pre-invasion responses to the Prague Spring will be analyzed in close connection with, firstly, the political interplay on the domestic level, especially with other forces of the Left, in the context of the radical student protests; and, secondly, the internal situation of the communist world and the parties' relations with their “brother parties.” In both cases, though significantly more so for the PCF than for the PCI, responses to the Prague Spring were conditioned by Soviet attitudes and the mounting crisis in the world communist movement. Finally, responses to the Prague Spring will be understood as being dependent, although in a less fundamental way, on the parties' traditional relationship to the Czechoslovak Communist Party. The chapter starts with a brief discussion of the Prague Spring itself as a domestic political development, followed by a discussion of the crisis it provoked in the communist world.

1. THE PRAGUE SPRING: WHICH SOCIALISM?²

As a domestic project for the reform of communism, the Prague Spring was a double development. On the one hand, it was a movement of political and economic reform, initiated and carried out by the communist party leadership. On the other hand, it was a movement of intellectual and cultural revival in the broadest sense. Critical debates developed on questions of socialism, democracy and culture, most often based on the older traditions of Marxist thought in Czechoslovak political and intellectual culture.³ It was the totality of the political and economic reforms carried out by the Czechoslovak Communist Party, in addition to the fact that the reform process was embedded in a liberated intellectual climate, that suggested new ways of understanding socialism.

1.1. *The coming of the Prague Spring*

The Prague Spring came about as a result of a profound crisis in socialist rule in Czechoslovakia, which was due to its economic, political and intellectual stagnation. It was largely a delayed result of de-Stalinization, or rather, the lack of it. In 1956, the Czechoslovak communist regime did not de-Stalinize in political or ideological terms, but instead shifted to what can be termed a neo-Stalinist regime.⁴ The head of the communist party and head of state, A. Novotný, initiated a number of half-hearted reforms, but the effect of these was by no means satisfactory.⁵ During the 1960s, the country was ruled by a small group of party functionaries in an oligarchic, inefficient and bureaucratic way. From the early 1960s onwards, dissatisfaction with the regime was widespread. Diverse problems and criticisms contributed to the eventual demise of the Novotnian regime in late 1967. Among these were economic problems,⁶ the increasingly openly expressed dissent by writers, the Slovak question, and the question of the rehabilitation of victims of the Stalinist trials of the 1950s. With regard to economics, the understanding grew among experts and in the apparatus that the economic deficiencies were built into the (neo-)Stalinist system. An influential professor at the Institute of Economics in Prague, O. Šik, along with Z. Mlynář and others, argued that the nationalization of production was not the final stage of the socialist economy. Rather, it should be followed by the introduction of a number of market mechanisms.⁷

Writers were at the core of the political dissent against the regime from the early 1960s onwards. The Writer's Union, at the time "an oasis of democracy,"⁸ became the locus for the discussion of political and institutional problems, and, more generally, of socialism, Marxism and democracy. Meanwhile, a broad revival of cultural life took place in society, involving poets, filmmakers, artists and philosophers. In philosophy and political thought, a re-examination of Marx's earlier works and of Hegel led to investigations into the connection between socialism, democracy and humanism. There was influence in this regard from the West European Marxists A. Gramsci, H. Marcuse and R. Garaudy, and the Austrian Marxist E. Fischer.⁹ Furthermore, changes in the interpretation of national history were so important that the Prague Spring has been called the "historians' revolution."¹⁰ The emergence of re-interpretations of the history of the Czechoslovak Communist Party itself was pivotal. Questions arose as to whether the communist party leadership—post-war Stalinist leader Klement Gottwald above all—had followed the "right line," which now began

to be defined in terms of the interests of the Czechoslovak people.¹¹ Furthermore, there was the problem of Czech-Slovak relations, as old as the Czechoslovak Republic itself. Complaints about Czech political and cultural hegemony had always existed among Slovaks. The communist regime had maintained the classic Marxist-Leninist view that the problem of nationalities would solve itself automatically once Slovakia had caught up economically. The fact that this proved untrue revealed a serious dysfunction of the system as a whole. An asymmetric form of limited federalism, which included setting up Slovak institutions such as the Slovak National Council and the Communist Party of Slovakia (CPS), was inscribed in the constitution in 1948. Even though in practice these institutions were deprived of real powers, it was the existence of separate Slovak institutions that enabled widespread public frustration in Slovakia to start expressing itself politically.¹²

The failed reforms did nothing but increase public discontent.¹³ The issue of the political trials of the early 1950s became a catalyst for political protest, in which the grievances of different groups merged and intensified. Between 1952 and 1954, a series of political show trials had taken place, commonly known as the Slánský trials, after R. Slánský, former general secretary of the CPCS. With direct Soviet involvement, a purge of the party apparatus was carried out and a large number of alleged opponents of the regime were convicted of “bourgeois nationalism” (if they were Slovaks) or on other, obviously false, grounds in show trials. While already in 1956 public opinion had pressured for a revision of these trials, the party had only paid lip service to it. From the mid-1960s, a revision of the trials was initiated with much reluctance, and without a satisfactory outcome. The matter had a strongly mobilizing effect, especially on Slovak movements.¹⁴ The Congress of the Union of Writers, held in the summer of 1967, was crucial in bringing the debate on political reform to the surface. The writer L. Vaculík was most outspoken in denouncing in the clearest terms the power abuses in the system. He carried the critique a step further by not only pointing at the ways in which political power was exercised, but also at the structures and institutions themselves (e.g. the constitution). Also M. Kundera and V. Havel expressed strong criticism, which the president of the Union, J. Heyndrich, fiercely condemned. In response, the CC Plenum announced a hard line against dissidents in late September 1967, and actions were taken against Šik and some of the most critical writers.¹⁵

However, Novotný's power position had been based not on public sup-

port but on loyalty from the core apparatus, and on the backing of the Soviet leadership. Hence two factors were of critical importance in provoking the fall of the Novotný regime: the fact that public discontent found its way into the party apparatus; and Soviet unwillingness to support Novotný to the bitter end. The wave of opposition against Novotný inside the highest party ranks gained momentum in the autumn of 1967. At the CC Plenums in September and October, the cleavage between reformists and conservatives came to the fore. At the October meeting A. Dubček denounced conservatism in the party and spoke at length about the Slovak question. While he was openly supported by, among others, J. Špaček, F. Kriegel and V. Bilák, Novotný attacked him for nationalism. The reformers, now joined by high party officials such as O. Černík and D. Kolder, initially focused on the issue of the separation of the functions of first secretary of the party and president of the republic.¹⁶ Novotný sought support from the Kremlin and invited Brezhnev for a visit to Prague on 8 December. After having spoken to each of the top leaders, Brezhnev concluded that it was not opportune to support a leader who did not enjoy a strong basis of support among the party ranks.¹⁷ The actual removal from power of Novotný did not happen in a carefully planned and concerted way, but was, rather, the result of a series of opportunities swiftly taken. At the CC Plenum of 5 January, Novotný agreed to give up the post of general secretary; the choice of Dubček as his successor was a compromise between more radical reformers and conservatives.¹⁸

1.2. Political and economic reform: socialism and democracy

The first political and institutional reforms under Dubček were to do with the improvement of administrative methods, the democratization of the internal functioning of the party, and the disconnection of party and state institutions. The debate on the reform of the party was led by Z. Mlynář, appointed by the party as head of a "Commission on Political Reform." Mlynář proposed the participation in decision making of independent political and social groups alongside the communist party. He did not advocate a true multiparty system but foresaw the enhancement of the National Front and of the role of the non-communist parties in it. The National Front had existed since 1945. A Social Democratic Party and a Peasants' Party were represented in it, but they did not operate as oppositional forces.¹⁹ The "Action Program," issued by the CC Plenum in early April, addressed relations between the state, the party, society and the individual.

It outlined the general direction of the reforms, while committing to only a few measures explicitly. The most innovative statements in the program included provisions for the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and freedom of expression.

Important political reforms were sanctioned following the Action Program, including a ban on the accumulation of party and state functions, the introduction of secret voting, and the protection of the rights of political minorities. Furthermore, an overall change in styles of leadership occurred after April. At the very top of the party, a genuine form of collective leadership came into being.²⁰ However, the Action Program, and the political reforms that were introduced in the wake of it, did not come to terms with the key issues of party pluralism. The principle of the “leading role of the communist party” was not abandoned, but redefined: the party was to retain its hegemonic role, but using persuasion rather than coercion. The Action Program granted the communist party a privileged role in the National Front; the other political groups in it were considered as partners but not as equals to the party.²¹ Throughout the Prague Spring, the communist party never seriously committed itself to giving up its political monopoly. While this was obviously to do with the constraints imposed by the communist bloc, much uncertainty existed on the issue also among the most radical advocates of reform.²² The abolishment of censorship by state organs was put into effect in late June. The law did not, however, mention censorship by “any organ” as the Commission on Political Reform had recommended.²³

The implementation of the reform program was made possible by personnel changes in the highest ranks of the state and party apparatus, the secret services and the military. Following public demand for the replacement of Novotný as head of state, the CC Plenum of April voted Svoboda as the new president of the republic. Like Dubček, Svoboda was a compromise figure in favor of moderate reform led by the party.²⁴ Major changes also took place in the military: between February and April 1968, the balance of forces in the People’s Army shifted to the advantage of reformists. Long-term defense minister General B. Lomský was replaced by General M. Dzúr, who had close ties to Dubček. An important personnel shift also took place in the internal security network and the secret police, whereby a significant number of KGB trustees was removed.²⁵ However, despite the presence of influential reformists among the political and military elites, the top party and state organs were still largely composed of those who had

served under Novotný and who, without openly being opposed to reform, were not very committed to it either.²⁶

While the January overthrow had largely been a consequence of the economic crisis, and the political changes were largely meant to shape the context in which economic change could take place, no major economic reform program was carried out during the Prague Spring. This was due, firstly, to the enduring economic crisis which made the reformers reluctant to carry out their risky innovations; and secondly, to the divergence of views on what was to be done between leading figures such as O. Šik and L. Strougal. The Černík government carried out measures regarding the legal status of the enterprise, its autonomy in planning and regulation, and the desegregation of existing enterprise groupings.²⁷ Šik proposed a far-reaching program for reform: it was an encompassing model for a new type of socialist planned economy, combining it with elements of liberalism as well as a radical-democratic view of the democratization of economic decision making. He proposed, for example, the establishment of “councils of the working people” in the factories, which were to include only blue-collar workers and to which the management should submit its plans. Dubček, however, downplaying the radical elements, emphasized the authority and autonomy of the factory management.²⁸

1.3. *The rediscovery of national traditions*

The Prague Spring was a national revival, in a double sense. Firstly, there was a revival of Slovak national consciousness and an increasingly frank expression of frustration by Slovaks regarding their status as second-rank citizens. Presidium member Smrkovský, although a Czech, became one of the most influential advocates of a change in Czech–Slovak relations. He urged for a Marxist revaluation of national sentiments as a political force, and for a return to Leninist views on the self-determination of peoples.²⁹ While different models for a federalized state were proposed, there was a broad consensus that the centralized state was no longer effective.³⁰ By mid-August, although no agreement had been reached on major issues, the country was “on the threshold of federalism.”³¹ The Prague Spring was also a revival of Czechoslovak national identity. This was closely connected to the rediscovery of Czechoslovakia’s (central) *European* identity, culture and history, and the repositioning of Czechoslovakia at the heart of Europe. There was a widespread sense among reform-minded intellectuals of belonging to Europe in a cultural and intellectual sense. This raised the ques-

tion of pan-Europeanism and, implicitly, the upsetting of the East–West division of the continent.³² Although this was not explicitly antagonistic to the nation’s belonging to a Slavic or East European historic-cultural sphere, it did render problematic the primacy of this sphere of belonging and the East–West divide. In addition, European roots and aspects of Marxism were rediscovered, which, similarly, demonstrated the diversity of Marxist interpretations. A few authors, such as Z. Mlynář, more explicitly turned away from what they called “Asian” and Russian Marxism and understood the Prague Spring as a necessary shift back into the cultural-political sphere of European Marxism.³³

An important strategic and diplomatic dimension corresponded to this: Dubček’s Czechoslovakia, without wishing to undo its allegiance to the Soviet-dominated communist bloc, aimed at expanding its diplomatic, economic and cultural contacts with several West European states. To be sure, the CPCS leaders throughout the Prague Spring at all times asserted their commitment to proletarian internationalism and allegiance to the Soviet Union “for all time.” Constructive involvement in the Warsaw Pact and the Comecon were emphasized, the attempt being to reform these organizations on a more egalitarian basis and to direct their strategies towards contacts with Western Europe. However, it became evident that the interpretation of internationalism was increasingly colored by the country’s *own* national and strategic interests, for example at the preparatory meetings to the planned conference of world communist parties, which took place in Budapest in February and April 1968. The Czechoslovak delegation emphasized the principles of the sovereignty of socialist states, the equality of communist parties, and non-interference, and favored a constructive policy vis-à-vis Romania and Yugoslavia.³⁴

Besides this, the Czechoslovak military leadership protested against Soviet pressures to increase its conventional military spending, and a lively public debate developed on this issue. The so-called Gottwald Memorandum, issued by the Klement Gottwald Military Political Academy in May 1968, strongly criticized the WTO and proposed a far-reaching revision of Czechoslovak military policies. In July, in response to the WTO military exercises taking place at the Czechoslovak border, the post-January chief political officer, General Prchlík, outlined his ideas about more equal power relations inside the Warsaw Pact while at the same time making the alliance more cohesive. He called for the formulation of an independent Czechoslovak military doctrine. The CPCS leadership expressed wishes to

engage in commercial, diplomatic and cultural contacts with France, Italy, Austria and ultimately West Germany. Crucially, Czechoslovak foreign policy papers started to refer to “our own German policy” and to “a more effective policy in Central Europe.”³⁵ Between 17 and 19 April 1968, E. Bahr, a close collaborator of W. Brandt in the SPD and one of the architects of early *Ostpolitik*, visited Dub  ek unofficially. They held talks on political and economic contacts between both countries, and on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Moreover, West Germany responded positively to Czechoslovakia’s request for a loan. Responding to WTO pressures, Dub  ek cancelled this request and asked for an equivalent loan from the Soviet Union instead.³⁶

1.4. *Tension between revival and reform*

During the Prague Spring there was a constant dynamic interaction between official reform from above, and pressure at the grassroots from intellectuals and their organizations, from the press, and from students and other social movements. In a public speech in March, Dub  ek felt the need to distance himself from “some extreme tendencies and non-socialist moods” in the revival movement, which, he nevertheless stressed, was “healthy on the whole.” Although the party showed willingness and ability to reform itself internally, already at this point it felt the need to re-assert its authority.³⁷ Nevertheless, a critical revival took place inside the party too. Local organizations started criticizing their leaders, taking initiatives, and stimulating public debate. At the April Plenum, for the first time, the different tendencies became apparent and were reported by the party press.³⁸ Throughout March and April, an enormous number of press articles criticized the past policies of the CPCS, proposed radical change, and called for the replacement of conservative leaders. An influential text in this respect was the so-called Open Letter from 134 Czechoslovak Writers and Cultural Personalities to the CPCS CC. The letter was published following the Dresden meeting of the Warsaw Pact (on which more below), and was meant to urge the party leadership to resist pressure from abroad and to remind it that its responsibility lay “above all, with its own people.”³⁹ This was an implicit call for more (national) autonomy vis-  -vis the communist bloc.

Importantly, new political organizations emerged. While existing political parties, the Socialist Party and People’s Party, were re-activated, a Social Democratic Party came into being, without formally being legalized. Influential new organizations were KAN, the “Club of Engaged Non-Party

Members,” and K213. The first was a club for political discussion, which wanted to participate in the building of “a new political system, hitherto never realized in history: democratic socialism.” It advocated party pluralism and the defense of civil and human rights. It was founded by 144 members, a number which rose to 3,000 just before the invasion.⁴⁰ The K213 was a more controversial matter: it was organized as a group of former victims of the communist takeover, charged by the 1948 “Law for the Defense of the Republic (n. 213).” Its starting point was to strive for the rehabilitation of all victims; from there, it broadened the debate on human rights.⁴¹ None of these parties or groups, however, were allowed into the National Front, and they continued to have a semi-illegal status. On the other hand, the fact that they were no longer actively persecuted by the regime *de facto* announced a new approach to pluralism.⁴²

In the context of a mobilization of conservative forces and of restrained reactions by the moderate reformists in May–June, a polarization of positions occurred following the publication of the “Two Thousand Words” Manifesto of 27 June. Written by influential writer L. Vaculík and signed by 70 artists, intellectuals and public figures, it became the manifesto of the radicalized revival movement.⁴³ It was considered threatening by the conservative communists, but also moderate reformers thought of it as “going too far.” This was because, firstly, although expressing its support for the reform undertaken so far, the text bitterly criticized the party leadership for not carrying the reforms through at a faster pace, thereby questioning its legitimacy. In order to avoid the conservatives gaining strength, the text argued, the people of Czechoslovakia should take “direct action” at the local level, through debate, demonstrations and strikes. Secondly, the text openly warned against foreign intervention in Czechoslovakia. It called upon the Czechs and Slovaks to “back our government, with weapons if necessary.” The CPCS leadership, increasingly constrained by the pressures from the Soviet Union and other socialist states, specifically on the questions of pluralism and censorship, condemned the text in a CC resolution.⁴⁴

The pressure from the revival movement affected the balance of forces in the communist party, and by mid-July there were indications of a major leadership turnover under way. The 14th National Party Congress, anticipated by Dubček and to be held in September 1969, was to discuss far-reaching reforms, such as the complete lifting of press censorship. Furthermore, a new statute for the internal organization, functioning and role of the communist party was being discussed in preparation for the upcoming

central party congress. Although the draft statute also included a number of conservative elements, it could rightly be called a new model for a communist party. Innovations were, for example, secret voting, the protection of the rights of minorities, and voluntary party membership.⁴⁵ Crucially, observers and actors in the Prague Spring started to view their experience as providing a new model for socialism. In a March article in *Literární listy*, the journal of the Writers' Union, it was suggested that there were now "three models of socialism in Europe," the Soviet, the Yugoslav and the Czechoslovak, "which is forming itself." It was, furthermore, stated that Czechoslovakia might turn from a loyal member of the "iron square of the North" (i.e., with the Soviet Union, Poland and East Germany) to "a certain constellation of the South," with, it was said, the PCI, Hungary, and "in some respects" Romania.⁴⁶

2. RESPONSES IN THE COMMUNIST WORLD

2.1. *Soviet and East European concerns*

In analyzing the mounting tension in the Soviet-aligned communist world in response to the Prague Spring, I will focus on the important moments of decision making in the run-up to the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The eventual decision to put an end to the Prague Spring by military means resulted from the link between, on the one hand, the challenge posed by the Prague Spring to the conception of socialism and the alternative it proposed to "orthodoxy," and, on the other hand, concerns regarding Czechoslovakia's foreign and military policy and its loyalty to the Soviet-led communist world.

Regarding the domestic dimension, the fear was that the new alternative model for socialism would no longer observe the "leading role of the communist party." Furthermore, the critique of the (Stalinist) past of the regime, and particularly the revision of the trials of the 1950s, were worrying.⁴⁷ The personnel changes in the party leadership (in particular the ousting of Novotný in April) and in the security and military network caused alarm among the Soviet leaders: it was feared that the secure channels of their influence over Czechoslovak politics were being eroded.⁴⁸ The Polish and East German leaderships were particularly concerned about a spillover effect of the Prague Spring ideas to their own societies. Gomułka was alarmed by student riots that took place in a number of Polish cities in early

March, where banners were shown which read, "Poland is awaiting its own Dubček."⁴⁹ In the context of a certain revival of dissident activity in 1967–68, the Soviet leaders were also concerned about a spillover effect. The leading dissident A. Sakharov, for example, openly supported the Prague Spring. Moreover, the Prague Spring seemed to strengthen national and democratic aspirations among students and intellectuals in some of the Soviet Republics, notably in the Ukraine.⁵⁰

Recent archival findings have stressed the importance of the foreign and military policy dimensions. Although Czechoslovakia did not openly question its membership of the Warsaw Pact and the CMEA, the combination of its interest in economic and cultural contacts with the West and its proposals to reform the communist bloc institutions amounted to a vision of détente that did not correspond to the Soviet understanding of the term. Strategically, Czechoslovakia was crucial to the Soviet Union, as it was the country situated most to the West in the Warsaw Pact and the only country sharing borders with both the Soviet Union and West Germany. The Soviet leaders increasingly felt that Czechoslovakia was the "weakest link" in the defense system of the European communist world. Czechoslovakia had refused, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, to let Soviet ground troops be stationed permanently on its soil. In the mid-1960s, the Soviet Union had drawn up a number of top-secret agreements providing for the deployment of Soviet tactical warheads and nuclear-capable delivery vehicles with Hungary, East Germany, Poland and also Czechoslovakia. In the Czechoslovak case, however, the absence of permanently stationed Soviet troops made the actual deployment of these arms problematic. The construction of the facilities, due for 1967, had to be postponed until 1969. The Soviet fear was that the new leadership would not co-operate in the further execution of the program.⁵¹

The Czechoslovak "rebellion" was only the most visible expression of the multiple conflicts and cleavages in the European communist bloc and the severe crisis of Soviet hegemony. There was a "Romanian crisis" inside the Czechoslovak crisis, and the political and military measures against Czechoslovakia were also, for the Soviets, a way of dealing with Romania's autonomous line in foreign policy. Besides the more reliant attitude towards China, Romania opposed Soviet plans to reform the CMEA, developed an independent line on the war in the Middle East in 1967, and initiated diplomatic contacts with West Germany in the same year. The conflict rose to a peak in early 1968, when Romania once more refused to under-

sign the Soviet-proposed Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Arms, and adopted a very critical attitude at the preparatory meetings for the planned world conference of communist parties in Budapest. Moreover, Soviet–Romanian talks on the renewal of a bilateral friendship treaty failed. Moscow particularly feared that Romania sought to form a “special grouping” with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, as an alternative to the Warsaw Pact. Although Czechoslovakia did not respond to the concrete proposals made by Romania in this respect, both countries kept in close contact with one another. Romania was not invited to the WTO meeting in Dresden on 25 March, at which “the Czechoslovak question” was discussed. It was, from that point on, excluded from the coercive diplomacy and military action of the Warsaw Pact countries against Czechoslovakia.⁵²

2.2. The genesis of the decision to invade

The leaderships of the Soviet Union, East Germany and Poland started to worry seriously about the developments in Czechoslovakia in March 1968. There was already at this stage a consensus that the Prague Spring needed to be halted and undone.⁵³ The WTO meeting in Dresden in March was a first important sign of Soviet and East European concern about the Prague Spring, and a first example of the kind of pressure the allies were ready to exercise on the Czechoslovak leaders. At the same time, there was an important disagreement throughout the spring and summer among the WTO countries as well as in the Soviet Politburo, on how to secure the end of the Prague Spring. The opponents of the Prague Spring in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union envisaged three possibilities. The first option consisted of exercising pressure on Dubček and the actual CPCS leadership, so that they themselves would undo the Prague Spring reforms and censure the revival. The second option consisted of the non-military removal of the reform-minded leadership from leading party, state and military offices, and their replacement by “friendly elements.” The third option was military intervention, which would need to be corroborated by a political intervention of some kind. The East German and Polish communist leaderships pressured the Soviets towards the third option.⁵⁴

The Soviet leadership at first considered a wide range of the costs and disadvantages connected to a military invasion: financial costs; possible casualties; the image of communism in the world; and the loss of loyalty of the CPCS and the Czechoslovak people which had the reputation of being Soviet-friendly. The possible protest by Romania, Yugoslavia, the West

European and other out-of-government communist parties was envisaged but considered to be of secondary importance.⁵⁵ Crucial in overruling objections to the invasion among the Soviet decision makers were the signs received from NATO and the United States that there would be no reaction following an invasion. Hence, it was expected that the longer-term goals of *détente*, as understood by the Soviet Union, would not be jeopardized by an invasion.⁵⁶ The priority given to relations with the United States and West Germany, as well as to the coherence of the European communist bloc, over the cohesion of the wider world communist movement or the global appeal of communism, was clear. While the first option was no longer seriously being envisaged from late May onwards, the second option was being tried out between May and July. A military intervention was seriously considered at least from early May onwards, and became the only option seriously envisaged from mid-July onwards.⁵⁷

Brezhnev attempted to urge Dubček back into full “orthodoxy” by writing him a series of letters.⁵⁸ The first major sign of bloc concern was the calling of a meeting of the communist leaderships of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in Dresden in late March, immediately following the resignation of Novotný as the head of state.⁵⁹ On 4 and 5 May, at a bilateral summit, Brezhnev undertook a last attempt to make Dubček change his mind and halt the Prague Spring. The Soviet delegation expressed particular worries on three issues: the upcoming 14th Party Congress, the removal of “loyal” elements in the military, the freedom of the press, and the question of orthodoxy.⁶⁰ Brezhnev urged his personal contacts in the CPCS actively to combat the reformist tendencies in the party. To this end, a series of meetings took place between high-ranking Soviet officials and a number of conservative Czechoslovak leaders, including Bilák and Kolder, from May onwards.⁶¹ Nonetheless, the Kremlin came to consider the possibility of the conservative CPCS leaders taking over power in a peaceful way as neither plausible nor desirable.

At the WTO meeting held in Moscow on 8 May, to which neither Czechoslovakia nor Romania were invited, the Soviet, East German and Polish leaders aimed at finding further support for the military option. Military exercises on Czechoslovak soil were initiated shortly afterwards. In mid-May, the Soviet Defense Council dispatched a high-ranking military delegation to Prague, and from late May onwards large-scale military exercises were carried out on Czechoslovak territory at the border with the Ukraine.⁶² At the latter’s request Brezhnev afterwards informed Dubček

about the Moscow talks, but carefully avoided the two crucial issues: that the possibility of a military intervention had been raised, and that military exercises were under way.⁶³ Dubček and the reform-minded CPCS leadership reacted to the mounting pressure by showing signs of willingness to resist it to some extent, while at the same time trying to make the Prague Spring acceptable to their WTO partners and seeking to control the most radical elements of the revival movement.⁶⁴

A number of events throughout June and July strengthened the perception in the Soviet leadership that the situation in Czechoslovakia was “getting out of hand.” Firstly, Dubček turned down a proposal by Brezhnev for a bilateral meeting in mid-June. Secondly, the “2000 Words Manifesto” caused great alarm in the Kremlin. Furthermore, the Soviet leadership was increasingly worried by contacts between the CPCS and the Yugoslav League of Communists as well as with the Romanian Communist Party. Dubček’s decision to bring forward the date for the 14th National Party Congress to early September aroused fears concerning major personnel changes, and renewed legitimization for the advocates of reform. All this led to another WTO summit, which was held in Warsaw on 14–15 July. Czechoslovakia was invited, but the CPCS Central Committee decided not to send a delegation. It proposed instead separate bilateral talks with the WTO countries including Romania, and also with Yugoslavia; this was not accepted.⁶⁵

It was at the Warsaw meeting of mid-July that the decision to invade was made. Gomulka now openly proposed to send troops to Czechoslovakia, and a consensus regarding this was created among all the WTO parties present, now including Hungary.⁶⁶ The meeting issued a “Warsaw Letter,” an ultimatum that denounced the “counter-revolutionary situation” in Czechoslovakia and enumerated a list of measures that were required from Dubček. The most important ones were the restoration of complete press censorship by the party, and the postponement of the 14th CPCS Congress.⁶⁷ Pravda’s publication of the Warsaw letter three days later was the first public indication of how serious the crisis in the communist bloc had become, and a sign that the codes of “comradely relations” had been broken. Dubček and the West European communist parties attempted in vain to prevent the publication of the letter.⁶⁸ In early July and mid-August the Soviets took a series of “diplomatic” initiatives, which were in fact demonstrations of force and ultimatums. They also served to prepare the necessary political framework for the invasion. The talks that were held in the small Czechoslovak town of Čierna-nad-Tisou on the border with the

Soviet Union between 29 July and 1 August were anything but “negotiations.” From the Soviet side, these talks were meant to propose an agenda which Dubček had no choice but to accept, while making it clear (in close to explicit terms this time) that otherwise military force would be used. This agenda included the undoing of all the Prague Spring reforms and future plans, a crackdown on the press, and a number of personnel replacements.⁶⁹

The decision to invade had at this point become independent of Dubček’s further reactions. This became clear from a multilateral meeting of six communist parties (with Czechoslovakia but without Romania), held in Bratislava two days after the Čierna meeting. The debate was shrouded in hollow phraseology and formalized Marxist-Leninist terms, and the closest to a clear indication of what was expected from Dubček was the reference in the short final declaration to “the common international duty of all socialist countries to supply, strengthen, and defend the gains of socialism.”⁷⁰ Brezhnev wrote a last “letter of warning” to Dubček on 17 August, in which he restated his earlier position. The letter did not explicitly mention the use of military force, which led Dubček not to regard it as an ultimatum.⁷¹ In a dramatic telephone conversation between Dubček and Brezhnev on 13 August, the former expressed willingness to step down as head of the communist party, to which the latter did not respond. Also, the so-called Prchlík affair demonstrated that the decision to invade had become independent of Czechoslovak responses to the pressure. The Soviets had been pressuring Dubček to take a distance from General Prchlík’s positions with respect to foreign and military policy. General Prchlík had reiterated on several occasions since mid-July his criticism of the Warsaw Pact and the need for a more independent foreign policy. Following a message of complaint about this from the Soviet Politburo, the Czechoslovak Defense Ministry issued a statement of disapproval of Prchlík’s statements on 15 August—but there was no Soviet reaction.⁷²

In Czechoslovakia, during the weeks prior to the invasion, divisions inside the Presidium occurred and pressure from public opinion mounted.⁷³ Divisions among the CPCS leaders appeared, partly as the result of continued Soviet pressure on the Czechoslovak leaders and closely related to Soviet attempts to secure the political turnover that needed to accompany a military invasion. The Bratislava Conference provided the opportunity for the anti-reformists in the CPCS delegation (including Bilák, Kolder and Indra) to hand over a so-called Letter of invitation to the Soviets. In

mid-July, the Soviet Politburo had requested V. Bilák, who increasingly affirmed himself as the leader of an anti-reformist coalition inside the CPCS leadership, to send them a "Letter of invitation." The letter was not made public by the Soviet leadership after the invasion, which indicated that it was not meant to provide a legal basis for it. Rather, it had been requested by the Soviets to assure themselves of some sort of commitment from the anti-reformist coalition, which was expected to take over political power immediately after the invasion.⁷⁴

3. THE PCF: SAVING "COMMUNIST UNITY"

3.1. *French and Czechoslovak communists*

One reason why the PCF had more difficulty in relating to the Prague Spring than did the PCI was to do with its affinities with, and privileged relation to, the (Novotnian) CPCS. This should not, however, be seen as a determining element: the changing relationship between the PCF and the CPCS throughout the Czechoslovak crisis was rather the effect of other factors than a major cause of the PCF's reception of the Prague Spring. Relations between the PCF and the CPCS had been close since the interwar period.⁷⁵ Both parties shared an *ouvriériste* (or workerist) culture. Regarding internationalism, the two parties were among the most loyal to the Soviet Union, and pro-Soviet feelings had always been stronger among their ranks and leaders than in other communist parties. In the post-1956 communist world, the two parties were allies on all major issues. In 1956, both parties reacted negatively at first to the changes introduced by Khrushchev. The two party leaderships specifically displayed strong resistance to reopening the cases of the Stalinist trials in their own parties and to rehabilitating those who had been condemned. In doctrinal terms, they were among the most "orthodox" and "anti-revisionist," and most strongly in favor of discipline and "unity."⁷⁶ Their relations had, nonetheless, somewhat deteriorated since the mid-1960s, as the Novotný regime criticized the PCF for its unwillingness to respond to de-Stalinization.⁷⁷ Finally, to R. Guyot, Bureau politique member and CC commissioner responsible for foreign policy, Czechoslovakia was a "family affair": he was married to L. London, the sister of A. London, who had been a victim of the Slánský trials in the 1950s.⁷⁸

The specific relationship that the PCF entertained with the CPCS can be considered part of a wider cultural phenomenon, namely, the interest in

Czechoslovak culture, politics and history on the French Left.⁷⁹ To be sure, the fascination with Czechoslovakia also existed on the Italian Left, though to a lesser extent. Czechoslovakia was considered as the East European country which, in terms of economic development, sociologically, and in terms of political traditions, most resembled West European societies. Furthermore, Czechoslovakia was loaded with symbolic significance on the European Left because of the communist takeover in 1948, and because of the trauma of the Munich Agreement of 1938. In French communist collective memory, the PCF had been the only European force to protest against the German occupation of Czechoslovakia.⁸⁰ In the post-1956 communist world, Czechoslovakia assumed a particular position, especially with respect to the ideological discussions which were of particular relevance to the Western parties. Prague was considered a “communist Geneva,” hosting several international communist institutions such as the World Peace Council and the offices of the theoretical journal *Problems of Peace and Socialism*. More specifically, the Czechoslovak Communist Party played a crucial role in relations between West and East European communist parties. To the PCF, and to a lesser extent to the PCI, it served as a go-between in its relations with other communist parties.⁸¹ Given the particular responsibilities that the PCF conceived for itself in the communist world and its greater involvement in it, these factors were far more significant in the case of the PCF than in the case of the PCI.

3.2. *Fragmented analyses of the Prague Spring*

A distinction will be made here between the PCF’s initial responses to the Prague Spring up to the escalation of tension in June, and its responses as of July, when these became entirely dependent on the situation in the world communist movement. Its initial responses shifted between lack of interest, a taboo on the questions which it raised regarding de-Stalinization, and tolerance vis-à-vis certain aspects of it.⁸² Insofar as there was support for the Prague Spring, it was primarily “formalistic,” that is to say, motivated by the will to defend the formal principles of party autonomy and state sovereignty. At no point did the PCF take the Prague Spring as an example for its own policies, and references to its own domestic program were at all times avoided when the Prague Spring was discussed. Between January and April 1968, therefore, the PCF paid rather little attention to the events in Czechoslovakia. The party leadership change in early January and the Action Program in April were reported by the PCF press, but in a succinct

way and without much commentary. The difference compared to the coverage of events in Vietnam—far more elaborate and passionately engaged—is striking. The PCF press reported on the Prague Spring in a tone that shifted between neutral coverage of the events, careful defense of some elements in the new course, and condemnation of others.⁸³ The PCF’s coverage of the Prague Spring reflected its understanding of “orthodox” socialism: the observation of internationalist loyalty, the leading role of the communist party, and the central role of the working class. The contents focused solely on the reform program led by the party and the changes taking place inside it, almost entirely ignoring the dimension of cultural revival.⁸⁴

With regard to the coming to power of Dub  ek in January, *Humanit  * hinted at the reasons behind the change and the unresolved problems in Czechoslovak society and politics: economic recession, the Slovak question, and the need for a separation of party and state institutions. The nature of these problems, however, was not further analyzed; nor was there a systematic criticism of the past regime. Continuities with the past were emphasized, and the fundamentally new character of Dub  ek’s policies was willfully ignored. Passed over in silence, for example, was the fact that freedom of the press had not existed before 1968.⁸⁵ Most importantly, the question of the revision of the political trials of the 1950s was tabooed, leaving it at vague comments regarding the “need for rehabilitation of those who were innocent and were arbitrarily condemned.”⁸⁶ It was troubling for the PCF to go into the question of the Stalinist trials, as this directly referred to the purges and the disciplinary measures that had occurred in the PCF itself during the 1950s. This is what made a more positive evaluation of the Prague Spring impossible. Already before April the press noted some negative elements of the Prague Spring. Criticism of   ern  k, which had appeared in *Rude Pravo*, for instance, was noted as a bad example of “the political debate becoming personal.”⁸⁷ Acquaviva perceived a “political void.”⁸⁸ An indirect way for the PCF to criticize certain aspects of the new course in Czechoslovakia was by “reminding” the CPCS of certain “Marxist-Leninist” principles. For example, it was often reaffirmed that the party needed to maintain its leading role, and progress needed to be based on support from the working classes.⁸⁹

The reluctance with which the PCF covered the Prague Spring was a conscious policy. The BP meeting of 1 April decided that the party should take on a “prudent attitude” vis-  -vis the events, as there was a “lack of precise information.”⁹⁰ At the same time, the leadership did have more so-

phisticated information on the situation than it would seem from its press coverage. A more elaborate report, for internal discussion only, which Hentgès sent to the Secretariat in mid-January drew a more honest picture of the problems but also expressed a more negative judgement of the situation. Hentgès emphasized the country's economic problems, as well as its request for a loan from West Germany, an issue which the PCF press did not report. Negative points in the development, according to this analysis, included: the increasing influence of the "petty bourgeoisie," the "fascination for the West in certain layers of the population," disagreements in the CPCS leading organs on issues such as the economic program, and political opposition ("problems created by the adversary").⁹¹

The leading party organs—the Bureau politique and the Secretariat—did not seriously discuss Czechoslovakia until mid-March. On 19 March the Secretariat decided to "inform the party" of the events in Czechoslovakia and Poland, in response to the non-communist press in France which "tends to present demonstrations of young people in socialist countries as signs of a revolt."⁹² The doubt with regard to Dubček as a leader contrasted with the very enthusiastic acclaims of Gomulka and the crushing of the demonstrations in the Polish cities in March.⁹³ As to the issuing of the Action Program in early April, the Secretariat decided that Dubček's report to the CC "ought to be considered positive." This was not, however, for the innovations it was expected to bring about, but because it showed Dubček's readiness to combat "certain attempts to threaten socialism" and to reaffirm the country's international alignment.⁹⁴

Waldeck Rochet's attitude towards the Prague Spring was one of benevolent tolerance rather than genuine interest. In the central leadership he was supported in his position by his close collaborator and advisor on foreign affairs J. Kanapa, the younger R. Piquet, the well-known intellectual and party philosopher R. Garaudy, trade union leader B. Frachon,⁹⁵ and, probably, by "apparatchik" G. Plissonnier, although the last for reasons of discipline and friendship rather than out of genuine enthusiasm.⁹⁶ The leader of the CC commission on cultural policy, R. Leroy, who was generally known as favorable to change, supported Rochet on the issue of Czechoslovakia up to the invasion. However, his enthusiasm for the Prague Spring was never clearly outspoken and most probably it diminished as his rival on cultural policy, Garaudy, became an active supporter of the Prague Spring. Among the other members of the Bureau politique, the representatives of the "old guard," J. Duclos and J. Thorez-Vermeersch, were not

favorable to the Prague Spring, although, for reasons of party discipline, they abstained from making this public at this point.⁹⁷ Nor did G. Marchais, of a younger generation but increasingly influential in foreign policy matters and known as conservative and pro-Soviet, approve of the Prague Spring, although discipline prevented him from openly opposing the Rochet line. The editor-in-chief of party daily *Humanité*, E. Fajon, though considered as a conservative, might have been somewhat favorable to the Prague Spring. This was because he had started to develop criticism of certain aspects of the socialist regimes, notably anti-Semitism in Poland.⁹⁸

The Rochet line of formalistic and limited support was discussed at a lunch meeting between Rochet, Leroy and CC members P. Laurent and A. Rieu, and the Czechoslovak ambassador V. Pithart, in Paris on 5 April. The PCF delegation, though reassuring the ambassador that it considered the developments in Czechoslovakia “promising, important and favorable to the PCF,” did raise questions as to “where Czechoslovakia is heading.”⁹⁹ Following the Action Program, the official party line on the Prague Spring was laid down at the Central Committee meeting in La Courneuve on 19 April. It abstained from further judgements on the developments in Czechoslovakia themselves, and was narrowed down to a more formalistic position regarding internationalist relations and party autonomy. Although in his speech Rochet wished the CPCS “great success in the application of its program, which aims at the expansion of socialism,”¹⁰⁰ he stopped well before positively evaluating the substance of the Prague Spring. These were the first signs of responsiveness to the growing crisis in the communist world.¹⁰¹

The enthusiastic support expressed for the Prague Spring by a number of communist intellectuals contrasted with the reluctant party line. Garaudy was very enthusiastic about the Prague Spring and saw connections between the reform communism and the revival in Czechoslovakia and his own research into the humanistic and democratic character of Marxism. The Action Program seemed to prove his claims that both the class analysis and the leading role of the communist party needed to be reconsidered.¹⁰² Somewhat more cautious and closer to the official party line were the interpretations given by P. Noirot in *Démocratie nouvelle*. The interview with Dubček published in the journal in March 1968, although carefully in line with the PCF points of reference, was followed by an administrative sanction from the CC to Noirot.¹⁰³ The intellectuals connected to the journal *Les Lettres françaises*, P. Daix and L. Aragon in particular, granted extensive attention to the intellectual revival.¹⁰⁴ The points of reference in

Czechoslovakia for these intellectuals were not the party leaders, but rather the critical writers and the journal *Literární lysti*. Daix personally took up the promotion of the Prague Spring in France. His *Journal de Prague* reflected his positive impressions of his visits to Prague in December 1967 and March 1968.¹⁰⁵ Daix openly wrote about the problems of the Novotný regime (which he labeled as “absolute monarchy centralism”), and the ways in which it was criticized in the liberalized political climate. He went at length into the issue of the political trials. He denounced the “demagogic workerism” of pre-1968 Czechoslovakia, which, according to him, “did not correspond to the ideal of socialism.” All this sounded like a critique of the PCF. Acclaiming the “rediscovery of politics” by the population, he was especially enthusiastic about the fact that the people now called their leaders to account for their policies.¹⁰⁶

3.3. *May '68 and the domestic interplay*

The PCF's evaluations of the events in Czechoslovakia came to be dependent on its interactions and its relations with other domestic political actors in the context of the stormy May '68 events. The PCF's interpretation of the Prague Spring up to June can be read as the result of the ideological and strategic tensions that it experienced with its political rivals and partners. The dramatic political developments in France in May–June 1968 created a situation in which discursive and political competition on the French Left was of a fierceness unseen since the post-war years. These battles crystallized around questions of the nature of socialism and revolution. With regard to the events in Czechoslovakia, this meant that the PCF leadership needed to stress the genuinely socialist and revolutionary character of the Prague Spring, against doubts it might have entertained on this issue internally. In connection to this, it needed to emphasize the CPC's belonging to the Soviet-led world communist movement and its continued observance of Soviet-defined “orthodoxy.” It refused to understand either the events in France or those in Czechoslovakia as signs of the upsetting of the bipolar order in Europe. The May–June events in France will be dealt with here briefly, to illustrate these points.¹⁰⁷

During the sudden eruption of student and worker protests in May–June 1968, the PCF experienced tremendous problems in connecting to the new actors of protest, their agenda, their cultures, and their means of action. The contestation movements of 1968 perceived new problems and formulated new forms of criticism of the cultural and ideological foundations of

Western industrial capitalist societies and liberal democracies. Influenced by non-communist Marxist thinkers such as Herbert Marcuse, the ideas of the contestation movements explicitly referred to socialist revolution and to Marxism. However, the new Left interpreted Marxism very differently from both the revolutionary and reformist traditions of the “old Left”—in France represented by the PCF and the SFIO.¹⁰⁸ It was no longer only the economic structures and political institutions that were questioned, but rather the deeply rooted hierarchical structures in society and culture, such as family, gender and age. The structures of knowledge and education, the progress paradigm, modernization, industrialization, bureaucracy and the consumption society were all likewise put into question. Revolution referred to altering the structures of knowledge and interaction in everyday life, to instruments of action, to sexuality and upsetting the relationship between the public and the private, in sum, to other forms of emancipation than economic ones. Despite a mythologization of the workers, a strong *ouvriérist* discourse, and calls upon worker-student alliances, it were the students, artists and outcasts of society who were considered as revolutionary subjects next to the workers.

In terms of ideological points of reference, the contestation movement came about as a convergence of different traditions, old and new: Trotskyite groups, Maoism, the “traditional” anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist movement, and new forms of libertarian anarchism. Trotskyism was traditionally influential on the French Left.¹⁰⁹ Trotskyite groups criticized the PCF and the Soviet Union from the left in what was a rather traditional but radical perspective on revolution and communism. Maoist groups, such as the ones clustered around the journals *La voie communiste* and *Révolution*, had existed in France since the early 1960s. Some of these groups were actively supported by Maoist China and had undertaken attempts to provoke a Maoist breakaway from the ranks of the PCF.¹¹⁰ An influential anarchist group was the Fédération anarchiste. The most influential student leader, D. Cohn-Bendit, was a declared libertarian anarchist.

Politically, the party that had most affinity with these conceptions and with the cultures of the contestation movement was the Parti socialiste unifié (PSU). Founded in 1960 by, mostly, former SFIO adherents and some former communists, it had largely been disconnected from the socialist-communist convergence that had taken place in the mid-1960s. From the outset it had found common ground with the intellectuals of the new Left and had developed a niche of innovative Marxist thinking. Through the '68 events it

radicalized into a position which it presented as more radical, more revolutionary and more genuinely Marxist than the ones held by the PCF, the SFIO and the FGDS.¹¹¹ Although it remained marginal in terms of voters throughout the 1960s,¹¹² it succeeded in placing itself in a strategic position during the May–June events. It was closely connected to the leftist trade union CFDT, which played a crucial role in the contestation movement among factory workers. Furthermore, it collaborated closely with the most active student union, the Union nationale des étudiants français (UNEF).¹¹³

These groups understood the impasse of revolution in the West as the result not only of domestic factors but also of international ones, namely, the un-revolutionary character of the Soviet Union and the Soviet-aligned communist movement. Their international points of reference were the “existing” revolutionary regimes (China, North Vietnam, Cuba, Yugoslavia), but also “revolutionary situations” of protest mobilization in Western Europe and the United States. A convergence in terms of international points of reference took place on the issue of Vietnam. Vietnam was undoubtedly the dominant issue in political discourses on the Left in the late 1960s, the prime symbol of revolution to all groups on the Left and the most powerful instrument of mobilization. A fierce competition took place for the appropriation of the theme of Vietnam between all of the groups involved in the anti-war mobilization. The convergence was only apparent. The PCF followed the Soviet line, favoring the ending of the war and a negotiated peace that would recognize the Hanoi regime. Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s it organized a series of international meetings with representatives of the North Vietnamese communists in an attempt to “occupy” solidarity with the latter. The (proto-)Maoist and Trotskyite groups, by contrast, advocated the continuation of the guerrilla war with Chinese support until the complete defeat of South Vietnam.¹¹⁴

In a strongly disparaging tone, the PCF referred to the Trotskyite, Maoist and anarchist groups, and to the student movements dominated by them, as *gauchistes*. Its unwillingness to take these groups seriously was, to the PCF, a matter of deepest political identity and legitimation, as these groups fundamentally challenged what the party considered to be its monopoly on revolutionary politics. Furthermore, all these groups attacked the PCF for being un-revolutionary and compliant in the integration of the working classes into the bourgeois-capitalist system. Their fierce denouncement of bureaucracy and alienation was not only directed at the state, but also at the PCF. The PCF’s negative reflexes were due, furthermore, to the

fact that the success of Maoist, anarchist and Trotskyite groups put pressure on the unity of the party. The PCF reacted to the first demonstrations and strikes at the universities in early May with both suspicion and dismissal. It judged the demands of the students as unjustified and stated that these “bourgeois, false revolutionaries” were disconnected from the people, and especially from the working classes. In particular G. Marchais attacked the popular student leader Cohn-Bendit as a “German anarchist,” hereby exploiting the anti-German feelings that persisted on the French Left. By provoking unrest without a legitimate basis and in the absence of a genuinely “revolutionary situation,” it was said, these groups *de facto* (if not willingly) supported the government and the right-wing reactionary forces.¹¹⁵

However, four factors led the party to take the events seriously and get more involved:

- the dynamic of the movement itself
- the initial empathetic reactions to it in public opinion
- the increasing identification with it by the party’s own student organization UEC, by the PCF-allied trade union CGT, and by a number of communist intellectuals
- police repression against the student movements, especially after the first “night of the barricades” of 10–11 May.

The PCF started to develop a strategy in response to the events, which consisted, generally, in channeling the mobilized potential into an “orthodox” strategy for “orthodox” socialism.¹¹⁶ This primarily implied two things: firstly, the PCF and its affiliated organizations, such as the CGT, should gain control over the situation and acquire a dominant position (the “leading role”); and secondly, the situation should be made ready for the coming to government of a broad Left coalition, based on a programmatic agreement between the PCF and the FGDS. This was, a continuation of its Union de la gauche strategy initiated in 1965. It was to be carried out, firstly, through the undermining of de Gaulle’s power as the result of systematic mobilization against the regime and well-supervised strike action; secondly, by channeling these protests into conventional political and socioeconomic claims; and thirdly, by reaching an agreement for government with the FGDS. All this should strictly take place inside the framework of legality, so as not to provide a pretext for state repression and not to antagonize moderate public opinion.¹¹⁷

In the second half of May, the mobilization of workers rapidly amounted to the largest countrywide strike France had ever seen, involving up to 9 million workers. Initially, the CFDT rather than the CGT played a central role in the movement, and Trotskyite and Maoist influences were strong.¹¹⁸ However, the CGT increasingly took control of the mobilization. The CGT (and the PCF) thereby achieved three immediate goals: taking the lead in the wider protest movements, channeling the demands into socioeconomic ones, and improving the strategic political position of the PCF.¹¹⁹ Meanwhile, from mid-May onwards the party launched several appeals to the FGDS for the establishment of a common program, in view of the formation of a “popular government of democratic union,” of which the two political formations would constitute the backbone. Mitterrand, however, on 28 May, presented himself as a presidential candidate with Mendès France as prime minister.¹²⁰ This posed the PCF with the threat of being by-passed in a Left government coalition. Thus it needed henceforth not only to reckon with political competition from the *gauchistes*, but also from the centrist “third option.”¹²¹

Although the party continued its systematic political opposition by mobilizing against the referendum proposed by de Gaulle, by declaring itself “ready to take its responsibilities,” and by reinforcing the “Action Committees for a democratic government,” it was clear that the political dimension of its strategy had failed. The PCF-CGT strategy also failed in terms of social mobilization. The CGT engaged on 25 May in the so-called Grenelle negotiations with representatives of the employers and of government with classic (quantitative rather than qualitative) but far-reaching demands.¹²² However, the agreement negotiated by CGT general secretary Seguy was rejected by the rank and file of the Renault plant at Billancourt. Many workers felt that more could have been achieved, and the more radical among them blamed the CGT-PCF leadership for “managing the crisis of capitalism.”¹²³ The high point of the political crisis occurred in the last days of May when de Gaulle, apparently fearing the collapse of the regime, flew to Baden-Baden to discuss the state of affairs with the commander of the French troops there. However, the prospect of a sudden change in government, as well as the momentum of the protest movements, faded away when de Gaulle announced elections on 30 May. The PCF shifted once more to a broad Left strategy, presenting itself as the force of democracy and calling upon a broad mobilization against “Gaullist dictatorship.”¹²⁴

The June 1968 elections demonstrated the price that the PCF had to

pay for its tactical shifts and immobility during the May events. While the Gaullist and Republican parties together polled 46 per cent of the vote, all the parties of the traditional Left—PCF, FGDS and SFIO—lost votes. The election outcome was interpreted as follows: firstly, the May 1968 themes (which only the PSU had picked up on) did not appeal to a wide electorate; and secondly, there was a general desire to get back to traditional politics and traditional values such as security (on which de Gaulle had based his campaign).¹²⁵ The May–June events and the sudden changes in the political landscape Left the party in a general state of disorientation, which was reflected in fundamental disagreement in the leadership. Along with the cases of open dissidence in the CGT,¹²⁶ rifts also occurred in the PCF central leadership, notably at a secret CC meeting of 11 May at which Garaudy, Leroy and Aragon seriously criticized Marchais for his hostility towards the students.¹²⁷ In mid-May Aragon published his critical but relatively open-minded discussion with Cohn-Bendit in a special issue of *Les Lettres françaises*. In late May, a number of party intellectuals wrote a letter of protest to the party leadership, criticizing the party's entire approach. A delegation of the party leadership met with the angry intellectuals in early June, but eventually rejected their criticisms.

The PCF, in developing its strategy, was deeply concerned with the possible international implications of the situation in France and took what it considered as its internationalist obligations into account.¹²⁸ The PCF leaders were aware of Soviet strategic interests in the Gaullist government, as well as a lack of Soviet enthusiasm for a sudden upsetting of the bipolar constellation in Europe. The Soviet leaders certainly exercised pressure on the PCF leadership to dominate, control, contain and channel the revolutionary potential of May–June into a classic, communist party dominated Popular Front strategy. However, extreme and explicit pressure was not even needed, as it was exactly the strategy that was generally favored by the PCF leadership. Both the PCF and the CPSU considered it damaging and dangerous to provoke a dramatic upheaval of the political regime in France, as long as complete PCF control over the events was not absolutely assured. To the Soviet Union it was of paramount importance to avoid the coming about of yet another non-Soviet-aligned socialist or Marxist regime, especially in the context of its waning hegemony over the communist world and of the uncertainty in Czechoslovakia. What mattered to the Soviet leadership was, rather, to reinforce bloc cohesiveness in the function of its bargaining position vis-à-vis the United States and West Germany.

In two conversations between Soviet ambassador Zoryn and PCF leaders (Waldeck Rochet on 20 May and Guyot on 31 May), the former was generally appreciative of the PCF's strategy of carefully working towards a broad Left alliance. However, it was only on condition that post-Gaullist France would not become more pro-Atlantic, and on condition that the PCF maintained an "orthodox" line and would fight against far-left tendencies, that the Soviet Union supported the PCF strategy. The article "We support France," published by CPSU periodical *Novosti* on 30 May, illustrated this position of conditional support. De Gaulle was portrayed in this article somewhat more negatively than usual in the Soviet press—thus preparing for a possible regime change—as a leader with "a far-reaching perspective in international affairs," but "suffering from short-sightedness regarding the domestic situation."¹²⁹ The importance of the student movement was minimized and "ultra-revolutionary tendencies" were condemned and accused of benefiting from support from China. The article expressed its support for the workers and their actions, the trade unions, and "the most important organizational force of the working class, the PCF." On the other hand, it was recalled here that "the France that we support" was a country with a foreign policy independent from American "imperialism." This was a clear warning to the PCF to check its alliance with the socialists.¹³⁰

The PCF leaders furthermore discussed their domestic strategy with the East German SED at a series of meetings between the leaders of both parties during the spring and summer months.¹³¹ Generally, the East Germans approved of the PCF basic axes of fighting *gauchiste* influences and improving its strategic position among the forces of the parliamentary Left. In late July 1968, Guyot met with the responsible for relations with foreign communist parties in the SED Central Committee, H. Axen. Justifying the cautious attitude of the party in May, Guyot convinced his interlocutor at length of the perils that had been connected to the "double conspiracy" (de Gaulle and the far Left) directed at the PCF.¹³² In a discussion with a delegation from the Italian Communist Party in Paris on 1 June, the French communists also emphasized the foreign policy dimension to the current events in France. As Guyot put it: "The power [de Gaulle] has a foreign policy which we appreciate. It is in this framework that we understand the problem of post-Gaullism."¹³³

In the stormy domestic situation of May–June, none of the actors on the French Left paid much attention to the Prague Spring. Most of the groups of the new and far Left could not relate to Dubček and the reform commu-

nists in a direct way. Dub  ek and the Czechoslovak reformers, unlike Ho Chi Minh or Che Guevara, did not satisfy the need for charismatic revolutionary movements and leaders. With the important exception of *Le nouvel observateur* and to some extent the PSU, there was little comprehension and less curiosity for the Czechoslovak events. The parties of the reformist Left, the SFIO and the FGDS, showed some interest, but the lens through which they interpreted the Prague Spring was their relation to the PCF and how the events would affect it. Although *Le Monde* covered events in Czechoslovakia at length, it did not engage with it in a true political way.¹³⁴ Hence, a competitive dynamic towards the “occupation” of the Prague Spring on the French Left did not take place; rather, it was a question of defending and identifying with specific elements of it.¹³⁵

Three themes are briefly discussed here as examples of the interpretative tensions between the actors on the French Left regarding the Prague Spring: the nature of socialism; the privileged actors in socialism; and the world order.¹³⁶ With regard to the question of the nature of socialism, it was, as mentioned above, important to the PCF to demonstrate the genuinely socialist character of the events in Czechoslovakia. This was, to the PCF, a matter of defending the revolutionary character of the Soviet-aligned communist world and of its own strategy. It was challenged in this by currents of the new Left, such as *Le nouvel observateur*, which noted (and positively appreciated) elements of a liberal-bourgeois democratic tradition in the Prague Spring.¹³⁷ It was also a response to the analyses made of the Prague Spring by the Trotskyite *Lutte ouvri  re*, which concluded that the Prague Spring was not likely to develop into a genuine situation of revolutionary socialism. *Lutte ouvri  re* qualified the Prague Spring as “limited by the popular strata it represents as well as by its political content,” as nationalist, chauvinist and anti-Russian (this last point understood as a negative one). In early July the weekly still considered it very unlikely that the Soviet Union would put an end to the Prague Spring by military means, as there was “no popular revolt.” However, it strongly supported the 2000 Words.¹³⁸

As to the privileged actors in socialism, the PCF press and public statements continued to focus on the central CPCS leadership, increasingly referring to the “leading role of the communist party.”¹³⁹ In doing so, the interconnection between the reform communists and the critical revival movement, which was so typical of the Prague Spring, was ignored. The 2000 Words Manifesto was not mentioned at all in the PCF press, which suggested the party’s disagreement with it.¹⁴⁰ At the same time, the “danger of the

rightist forces” was increasingly stressed. Thus, the general picture was one of a unified communist party, which, however, was somewhat challenged from the “Right.” The unproblematic picture of a unified central leadership led by Dubček was meant to respond to new Left opinion in France, which emphasized the alliance between Dubček and a progressive revival movement and their distance from the conservative forces in the party. This was the general picture drawn by *Le nouvel observateur*.¹⁴¹ Also in *Les temps modernes*, the overall interpretation was that the reform-minded communist leaders, including Dubček, were allied with the people and “authentic intellectuals” against bureaucrats and neo-Stalinists in the party.¹⁴²

A third cluster of interpretative tensions, of particular interest to us, regarded the international order. *Le nouvel observateur* resolutely wished to see the Prague Spring as the herald of a new international and European order. It understood the Prague Spring and the May events in France as expressions of one and the same tendency, and both developments were identified with one another. Both developments, it was said, would help to undermine the static bipolar world and the status quo in Europe, “divided by neo-capitalists and neo-Stalinists.”¹⁴³ This went to the heart of the impasse in which the PCF found itself with regard to the status quo in Europe: because it could not interpret the Prague Spring as a development putting pressure on the division of the continent (for this would acknowledge the crisis of Soviet hegemony in the East), nor could it understand the events in France in such a way (because regime change was not likely to bring about a Soviet-loyal regime, but at most a neutralist one, not necessarily more beneficial to Soviet policies than the Gaullist one). It was therefore centrally important to the PCF not only to ignore the (pan-)European lines of thought in the Prague Spring revival, but also to underscore the convergence of views and interests between the CPCS, the CPSU and the Soviet-aligned communist world.¹⁴⁴ The rising tension in the communist world was entirely tabooed by the party press, until this became untenable by mid-July when, as we will see below, the PCF itself became an actor in the crisis. For instance, while the initiation of Soviet military exercises at the Czechoslovak border in May was not reported, the withdrawal of the Soviet troops in mid-July was noted without further commentary.¹⁴⁵

3.4. *The PCF's parallel diplomacy*

After 1968, the question of whether the French and Italian communist parties had been informed of the invasion beforehand became controver-

sial. The archives show that both the PCF and PCI leaderships were convinced by mid-July that an invasion was imminent. From that moment on, this was the only factor determining the PCF's attitude with regard to the events in Czechoslovakia.¹⁴⁶ Panic regarding an imminent invasion was aroused by a "confidential" letter from the CPSU dated 11 July to all West European communist parties, containing a "communication on the situation in Czechoslovakia." The letter had three goals: firstly, to get the Western parties to abstain from any positive comment on Dubček and the Prague Spring; secondly, to ask their *a priori* support for any further action; and finally, it contained a subtle request to put pressure on Dubček to undo the reforms: "We consider it the internationalist duty of all brother parties now to grant all necessary support to the Czechoslovak Communist Party. We consider it our duty to follow the situation closely and to be ready for *any possible turn of events*. We think that our information will help you to understand the events in Czechoslovakia and will *help you to take the necessary measures* to sustain the achievements of socialism in your country" [emphases added].¹⁴⁷

The Warsaw letter also aroused panic among the PCF leaders; they correctly interpreted it as a point of no return. *Humanité* reported the Warsaw meeting but for the time being not the Warsaw letter, as the party hoped that the letter would not be made public.¹⁴⁸ It was Rochet's deepest conviction that a military intervention should be avoided at all costs. This was so not because the Prague Spring needed to be saved or defended *per se* but, primarily, because an invasion would negatively affect the image of communism in the West (and hence the PCF's own domestic position in the already difficult circumstances); and secondly because it would inevitably initiate a phase of increased tension and Soviet dominance in the communist world. This was the background to the PCF's embarking upon what can be called an intra-communist diplomatic campaign. The party held a high profile in the WCM crisis, especially through talks with both the Soviet and Czechoslovak leaders. It was the perfect expression of the role that the PCF saw for itself in the communist world as a mediator and a force for reconstructing unity. The campaign was largely the personal project of Waldeck Rochet, assisted by Kanapa and supported by Guyot.¹⁴⁹ Undoubtedly, Rochet genuinely believed that his party could have an impact on the events.¹⁵⁰

Rochet's intra-communist diplomacy, although largely his own initiative, came about partly as the result of pressure put on him in the communist world and by the non-communist Left in France. Next to the Soviets' im-

licit request in the letter of 11 July quoted above, there was pressure from the Hungarians. In a meeting between Rochet and Komocsin of the Hungarian Communist Party on 4 May, Komocsin asked him to discuss Czechoslovakia with the Soviets and to present them with a more moderate view on the situation. As Komocsin said, the Soviets had “unilateral information” on Czechoslovakia, that is to say, a too negative image.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, at a meeting between the two party leaders, Mollet, of the SFIO, explicitly asked Rochet to “intervene in Moscow in favor of the actual CPCS leadership.”¹⁵² The Italian communists, who planned to go to Moscow in mid-July to discuss Czechoslovakia, also urged the French to undertake such an initiative.¹⁵³

On 15 July Waldeck Rochet met in Moscow with the Soviet leaders Suslov, Ponomarev and Kirilenko, and with Brezhnev the following day.¹⁵⁴ At both meetings, the Soviet leaders drew an extremely negative picture of the situation in Czechoslovakia, including “imperialist infiltration” and “rightist and anti-socialist elements.” Rochet attempted to dissuade the Soviets from the military option, urging them to put pressure on the Czechoslovaks by non-military means. His central argument was that, as there was no “open counterrevolution” as had been the case in Hungary, it would be impossible to make a military invasion acceptable to world communist opinion. This plea was essentially asking the Soviets to consider the interests of out-of-government communist parties in the affair, as well as the cohesion of the WCM. Rochet made no effort whatsoever to discuss the Prague Spring itself.

The immediate effect of the Moscow meeting was that Rochet and the Bureau politique now understood the near-certainty of an invasion, and that the only way to avoid it would be the complete and immediate undoing of the Prague Spring reforms. Although the Soviets had assured Rochet that they would do whatever possible to avoid a military invasion, the message was clear.¹⁵⁵ Rochet interiorized the Soviet interpretation of the situation in Czechoslovakia: “We are conscious that things are not going well there [...]. It is worse than I had imagined.” He envisaged his upcoming meeting with Dubček now “in new circumstances”; he assured Brezhnev that he would “forcefully insist that they accept your letter” (the Warsaw letter). Hence, Rochet’s meeting with Dubček in Prague on 19 July was meant to force the latter into undoing the Prague Spring fully and immediately.¹⁵⁶ At the meeting he urged Dubček to take “necessary measures,” in particular the immediate restoration of press censorship (whereby he referred to the 2000 Words) and the halting of the debate on party pluralism.¹⁵⁷ In the controversy surrounding Rochet’s initiatives, the PCF leader

was often portrayed as merely voicing Soviet interests. Although Rochet was obviously highly loyal to the Soviet leadership, and even more so to his own view on communist unity, his mission coincided with Soviet interests only to some extent, namely, insofar as it put pressure on Dubček. It diverged from Soviet interests, however, in that he genuinely wished to avoid a military invasion or other form of overt intervention in Czechoslovak affairs. His campaign coincided with the Warsaw meeting discussed above, on which the invasion option was approved. As we have seen, after this event Brezhnev was no longer interested in Dubček's responses to the pressure put on him. Nor, most probably, was he interested in the outcome of the Rochet–Dubček talks.

The divergence of Soviet and PCF interests in the matter became evident from the PCF's further initiatives. Upon his return to Paris from Moscow on 17 July (before the Prague meeting), Rochet drafted a letter to the Soviets in which the PCF insistently requested that the Warsaw letter should not be made public. Moreover, the PCF announced in this letter a proposal for a pan-European conference of communist parties on the Czechoslovak crisis.¹⁵⁸ With this proposal, which it immediately made public to all European communist parties, the PCF wished to state that Czechoslovakia had become a matter of principle concern to them and to all communist parties worldwide. In what must have been a mix of naivety and pretensions regarding the impact which the PCF could have, this initiative was intended to put pressure especially on the Czechoslovaks, and to a lesser extent on the Soviets. Many of the Western parties communicated that they supported it; among these were the PCI, the PCE, and the Austrian and British parties. However, the Soviets responded negatively to the proposal, as did Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria and even Romania. The Czechoslovaks themselves also preferred the crisis not to be dealt with in a public forum.¹⁵⁹ The PCF now asked the other Western parties "not to insist [on the holding of the conference] but to follow the situation closely."¹⁶⁰

The talks in Moscow and Prague and the conference proposal were illustrations of Rochet's vision on internationalism, which took the doctrine to the letter while ignoring the fact that the doctrine had always implied full Soviet dominance. This vision included the maintenance of unity and the avoidance of conflict through the observation of specific rules of interaction, respect for the existing hierarchies, and observance of "orthodoxy." Although the Soviet Union played a dominant role, individual communist parties should have a certain degree of autonomy and a part to play. How-

ever, the inaccuracy of this vision was clear in two ways. Firstly, the fact that Rochet acknowledged that the undoing of the Prague Spring, which he had never explicitly defined as un-socialist, was the only possible way to avoid a Soviet invasion, showed that the definition of “orthodoxy” did not come about as the result of fair discussions inside the world communist movement, but was defined by the Soviet Union alone. Secondly, in carrying out its intra-communist diplomacy, the PCF put itself into a position of isolation. Relations between the French and Soviet communists acutely deteriorated on the issue of the conference proposal, as to the latter it indicated that the PCF was carrying out *its own* campaign.¹⁶¹ The Soviets further pressured the French communists towards a public statement of alignment, which the latter for the moment resisted. Around 20 July there was an exchange of rather harshly worded telegrams. In a telegram dated 18 July the Soviets expressed their “surprise” about the proposal, and about the fact that Rochet had not mentioned it to Brezhnev.¹⁶² In an “urgent communication” the Soviets again affirmed that they were against the conference proposal, as, “in the current circumstances it would signify a rift between the communist parties of Eastern and Western Europe.” Furthermore, in this letter the Soviets requested a public statement from the PCF in support of the Warsaw letter. “Your party could have an influence, could present an example [to other communist parties in Europe]. ...Unfortunately, your conference proposal has enabled hostile propaganda to claim that the PCF is no longer in solidarity with the socialist countries.”¹⁶³

The fact that Rochet was at this point prepared to take this vision of internationalism seriously became clear from his expression of anger and disagreement vis-à-vis the Soviets, which was far more blunt than usual. The Bureau politique sent a telegram to Brezhnev, in which it refused to support the Warsaw letter, expressed its frustration regarding the issue of the European conference on Czechoslovakia, and warned once more against a military resolution of the crisis.¹⁶⁴ In the PCF leadership, Rochet, Kanapa, Guyot, R. Andrieu and maybe others now openly took their distance from the Soviet positions.¹⁶⁵ Irritation with the Soviets did not lead the PCF positively to reconsider the Prague Spring. Nor did it lead to improved relations with the Dubček leadership—on the contrary. Already in April Rochet’s speech on Czechoslovakia at Courneuve had provoked negative reactions from the CPCS, which expected a little more in terms of support for its new course. In a letter to the PCF, Dubček expressed his

“disillusionment” on this.¹⁶⁶ Its isolation in the communist world led the party to reaffirm *its own* internationalist and “orthodox” line, as distinct from the positions of both the CPSU and the CPCS. It was in this atmosphere, exceptional in the history of the PCF, that the CC resolution of 27 July should be understood. The resolution, earlier proposed by the BP on 24 July, unambiguously stated that the PCF would publicly condemn any use of force against Czechoslovakia. The CC furthermore agreed upon Rochet’s report of his talks, stating that “(these initiatives)... have demonstrated that the PCF is struggling towards unity, internationalism, and respect for the self-determination of every party.”¹⁶⁷

Meanwhile, in the perspective of an invasion, the party rank and file needed to be “prepared.” A sudden shift occurred in the party press on around 20 July. Whereas before this time the intra-communist tension had largely been silenced, it was now extensively covered. The focal point here was no longer the Czechoslovak Communist Party, nor the CPSU, but Waldeck Rochet and his “unifying” campaign. Statements from both the Czechoslovak and Soviet parties were most often reproduced without further commentary.¹⁶⁸ At the same time, however, *Humanité* prepared its readers by anticipating the Soviet justification for the invasion: it published a number of Soviet statements on weapon deposits in Czechoslovakia and on NATO military plans against the socialist countries in Eastern Europe.¹⁶⁹ At this point, the general view on the developments in Czechoslovakia was that socialism was seriously endangered by “anti-socialist forces,” but that the situation could still be saved.

The meetings in Čierna and Bratislava caused great relief: the general feeling in the PCF leadership, and the tone in its press, was that the military path had been averted.¹⁷⁰ *Humanité* trumpeted after Bratislava: “A historical event for the cohesion of the socialist countries,” “...the Soviets are very pleased with the outcome of the conference.”¹⁷¹ In what was undoubtedly an expression of appreciation vis-à-vis the Soviets, the PCF reaffirmed that it would participate in the pending project for the world communist conference, which was being prepared in Budapest.¹⁷² Another indication of their eagerness for reconciliation with Moscow was the PCF leaders’ decision in early August to foresee “ample positive coverage” in the party press of the situation in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.¹⁷³ The PCF leadership saw the invasion as averted, because this is what it wanted to see. Nevertheless, some reservations lingered on. The Secretariat took note of “certain differences” between the party’s own position and

that of both the CPSU and the CPCS. Moreover, it was reported here that Bratislava had not resolved all problems.¹⁷⁴ On 19 August, once more, a Soviet communication “prepared” the PCF leaders for the now certain invasion.¹⁷⁵ It was said that not all the worries that they had expressed in the Warsaw letter were assuaged: anti-socialist forces had not diminished their activity, revisionists were demanding the dismissal of the party leadership, and so on. In view of the now certain invasion, the Soviets once more sought public backing for their position: “...declarations from the brother parties expressing concern regarding the situation [...] would be of great help to the Czechoslovak comrades.”¹⁷⁶

4. THE PCI: SUPPORTING REFORM

4.1. *Initial support for the Prague Spring*

The initial reactions of the PCI leadership to the Prague Spring, both publicly and internally, were, on the whole, very positive.¹⁷⁷ The party shared the PCF’s argument on the need to maintain a level of communist party autonomy, but it went much further in its support. The Prague Spring was very often cited in connection to the party’s own concept of “unity in diversity” in the communist world. Besides this, and unlike the PCF case, the PCI’s positive response to the Prague Spring was to do with its *substance*. There was, at least up to early July, a genuine interest in what was going on and a positive evaluation of the larger part of the developments taking place. As was the case in France, Czechoslovakia was considered on the Italian Left as the most “Western” of East European societies. However, while the PCF had cautiously avoided connecting the Czechoslovak experiences to the French ones, the PCI did connect the Prague Spring with the “Italian road to socialism”; in this sense it served as an example for the party’s own strategy, at least implicitly.

Immediately following the turnover in the CPCS leadership in early January, the PCI Direzione issued a communication of support, welcoming the perspective of reform.¹⁷⁸ In order to obtain direct information on the complex situation in Czechoslovakia, the Direzione sent a number of specialists on an informative mission to Prague. In early March F. Bertone went to Prague to meet with party leaders, writers and trade union leaders.¹⁷⁹ His reading of the events, as reported to the Direzione, was moderately positive: he emphasized that there was a great consensus among lead-

ers and public opinion on the economic reform program, as well as on the need for political and democratic change (a less authoritarian party, a new role for parliament, and so on). However, he noted some worrying evolutions: tension between the new leadership and the military; the admittance by the new leadership that it had failed to inform the people in a satisfactory way about the changes; and its worsening relations with the GDR and Poland. Even though, as Bertone reported, the CPCS was sensitive about “not creating problems of foreign policy,” it was determined to continue its contacts with the West German Social Democratic Party. The Czechoslovaks asked the PCI not to emphasize this last point publicly, in order to avoid upsetting the East Germans too much.¹⁸⁰ At the same time, however, two Italian communists living in Prague, M. Rossi and F. Moranino, presented a totally different picture of the situation.¹⁸¹ They expressed great worries about Dubček’s abilities to face down the conservatives inside the CPCS, as well as regarding the reactions of the Soviet Union and the GDR.¹⁸²

The points of reference in the PCI’s analyses of the Prague Spring were: the link between socialism and democracy; the reform of the party; the economic reforms; and, to a lesser extent, the role of intellectuals and the development of Marxist thought. At the Central Committee meeting of 26–28 March, which dealt largely with the upcoming election campaign and to a lesser extent the student protests in Italy, very positive views on the events in Czechoslovakia were expressed.¹⁸³ The PCI here reached its peak of substance-related support for the Prague Spring: great emphasis was put on the link between socialism and democracy, and on the need to appropriate new methods and new political forces to achieve democratic socialism. In contrast to the PCF, the PCI highlighted the novelty of this experience and the contrast with other socialist regimes and experiences.¹⁸⁴ There was at least an implicit suggestion in this that there was a problem of democracy in other socialist regimes.

At this point, a *strategic* argument was introduced in support of the Prague Spring alongside the formalistic and substance-related arguments. The PCI, in contrast to the PCF, valued the Prague Spring as an expression of a wider development in Europe as a whole towards democratic forms of socialism. This was closely connected to the party’s particular interest in both détente and (pan-)European integration. The Italian communists understood the Prague Spring as important to the “advance of socialist forces in the West.” In his conclusions to the March Central Committee meeting, Longo stated that the Czechoslovak developments were “of great

interest to Europe.” This was so, he said, because “the coming about of a more advanced type of democratic socialism would not only represent a great contribution to the struggle of the working class and the forces of the Left in the capitalist countries, but would also stimulate us to overcome the fears which still stand in the way of a full development of democratic socialism.”¹⁸⁵ Moreover, Czechoslovakia was presented as an example of a socialist state able to “solve the problems of an advanced society, on a multi-party basis.”¹⁸⁶ All this was reminiscent of the maximalist interpretation of polycentrism, and therefore the PCI leadership was careful not to make the strategic argument too explicit. Given the delicacy surrounding the question of the model, there were no explicit references to the Prague Spring as a new model for socialism.¹⁸⁷

Similar points were emphasized in the interview with Dubček in the PCI’s daily *Unità* on 31 March, which was the first interview with Dubček by any foreign communist party paper.¹⁸⁸ In the interview, Dubček fairly openly addressed a number of problems, such as the unresolved divisions inside the Czechoslovak leadership, the past and present economic problems, and the need for the party to acquire greater legitimacy. *Unità* was particularly interested in, firstly, questions relating to the relation between the party and other political and societal forces; and secondly, the role of intellectuals in the construction of socialism. *Unità* once more noted the interest of the Prague Spring to Europe as a whole. It demonstrated affinity with various ideological strands of the Prague Spring, including the radical-democratic and liberal-democratic ones. The fact that the PCI press interviewed one of the most outspoken advocates of reform in the CPCS, O. Šik, was telling. Bertone’s interview with Šik in *Rinascita* in late March amply and openly discussed the “irresponsible” economic politics of the past, as well as the delicate issue of Czechoslovakia’s request for a loan from West Germany.¹⁸⁹

4.2. *Domestic politics and the qualification of support*

The initially enthusiastic reactions to the Prague Spring by the PCI can be explained, generally, by the changes which its own domestic strategy and domestic analyses had undergone since the early 1960s, which emphasized democratic procedures, the need to represent diverse groups in society, and co-operation with non-communist forces, without coming to terms with fully fledged political pluralism. As long as the CPCS seemed to undertake a course similar to the domestic program proposed by the PCI, the appre-

ciation was positive. Moreover, the PCI's position on Czechoslovakia came about partly as the result of dynamic interactions between the domestic forces of the Left, as was the case with the PCF. The conditions of the domestic interplay in Italy pressured the PCI towards a stronger identification with the Prague Spring than was the case for the PCF, as there was, on the Italian Left, a far more positive evaluation of the Prague Spring than in France. While the student and contestation movements were not very interested in it, the Unified Socialist Party (PSU) showed great interest.¹⁹⁰ A competitive battle over the "occupation" of the Prague Spring took place between the PCI and PSU. Relations between the socialist and communist parties, generally, were in this phase not hostile, but nor was there a constructive dialogue that went beyond lip service. Although the PCI had, at its 11th National Congress, adopted the strategy of collaboration between the communist and socialist parties, and despite the PSU's wish to see the *centro-sinistra* government opened to the PCI, there was no concrete perspective on a common program or an alliance between the two parties.¹⁹¹

During the campaign before the parliamentary elections of 19 May, relations between the two parties became embittered: while the PCI antagonized the *centro-sinistra*, the PSU turned Czechoslovakia into an election theme to discredit the PCI. It did so, firstly, by occupying the Prague Spring as a model for democratic socialism: the similarities of this with its own program, and the dissimilarities with the program of the PCI, were highlighted. The PSU was extremely sympathetic to the Czechoslovak events; specifically, it identified with the most critical revival tendencies in the Prague Spring. This implied criticism of the more conservative tendencies in the Czechoslovak Communist Party and even of the party as a whole, although there was sympathy for Dubček. In a speech in early April, PSU leader P. Nenni noted the empowerment of public opinion in Czechoslovakia, and contrasted it to the undemocratic party apparatus.¹⁹² The PSU accentuated the divergence inside the CPCS between a "conservative wing" and a "progressive wing," while hoping for the elimination of the former.¹⁹³ The PSU took up the Prague Spring to discuss socialism more generally: it was on several occasions affirmed that the type of socialism that would come about in Czechoslovakia would be "modern revisionist" and based on humanist Marxism. It would also be pluralistic, in the sense of a bi-party (socialist and communist party) or multi-party system in which the communist party did not assume a special role.¹⁹⁴ By bringing up these issues it implicitly referred to the contradictions in the PCI's democratic program for socialism.

Secondly, the PSU openly speculated about the possibility of an invasion, in order to discredit world communism. From April up to July, the party daily *Avanti* covered the “crisis of communism” in an exhaustive way. Divergences between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union in terms of military policy were emphasized, as well as the Soviet military maneuvers in the region and Soviet interference in Czechoslovakia.¹⁹⁵ The PCI responded to this by downplaying the crisis in the communist world. As the PCF, it did so up to around mid-July, when this became untenable. The Soviet military maneuvers were hardly reported. Not before late July *Rinascita* published a few “documents of the debate (*sic*) between the CPSU and the Czechoslovak Party,” in connection to the Warsaw letter. While the Warsaw letter itself was not published, these documents were reproduced without further comment, in an obviously embarrassed way.¹⁹⁶

It was in the context of the election campaign that the PCI very strongly felt the need to identify with the Prague Spring. Longo’s visit to Prague from 4 to 9 May, during which he met with Dubček, party leaders and trade union leaders, was partly motivated by the election campaign. As Longo stated to the Direzione, the trip could be “both useful to us and not damaging to them.”¹⁹⁷ To be sure, other motives played a part in this initiative: the PCI wished to demonstrate its support for the Czechoslovak experiment, not only vis-à-vis its domestic political partners but also vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. The trip had a high symbolic value, as Longo was the first West European communist leader to meet Dubček since January, as well as the first communist leader to do so since the Action Program. The PCI leadership was perfectly aware of the significance of the trip and its consequences for the party’s further positioning: as Longo said, once having been to Prague there was “no way back.”¹⁹⁸

From late May onwards, the PCI leadership, both publicly and internally, started to qualify and specify its support for the Prague Spring. This resulted from four factors: firstly, the development in Czechoslovakia itself and the information obtained; secondly, the domestic interplay which shifted, after the elections, towards pressure from the “far Left”; thirdly, the subordination of defending the Prague Spring to the alarming situation in the world communist movement; and lastly, disagreement in the leadership on how to evaluate the Prague Spring, which led to a certain immobility. With regard to the first factor, Longo, upon his return from Prague, watered down his public support for the Prague Spring somewhat, and his private support more significantly. The issues on which the PCI leaders pri-

vately started to moderate their enthusiasm for the Prague Spring revolved around the question of the extent to which the CPCS leadership was capable of controlling the movement it had unleashed. To the Direzione members, Longo admitted that "on the central party levels, unity has not been regained." The CPCS leaders themselves, he said, had admitted that certain groups in Czechoslovak society were hostile to the communist party because of its authoritarian past, and that among the reformist intellectuals, anti-Soviet and anti-socialist voices could be heard. This attitude increasingly took root among the working classes, Longo noted, and "extremist forces" were already taking advantage of this. In his view, the communist party did not have a satisfactory "political response": the party had close to no control over the press, and a reluctance to defend the party against criticism was widespread. Despite all this, there was enough to be optimistic about: there was no broad movement advocating the return to capitalism, and the country's international alignment was not being questioned.¹⁹⁹

Longo's public discussion of the Czechoslovak question following his trip was more positive. In an interview with *L'Unit  * he affirmed that, although there were in the highest party ranks opponents of the new course, Dub  ek and his supporters had a strong grip over the situation.²⁰⁰ In his report in *Rinascita*, he still warmly acclaimed the reform line proposed by   ik. On the other hand, regarding the question of party pluralism, Longo made it clear that, while he favored the presence of non-communist parties in the National Front, a privileged position for the CPCS should be maintained and no parties outside the Front should be legalized.²⁰¹ This position reflected the limits to the PCI's concept of pluralism. Support for party-controlled reform, rather than for the most critical expressions of the revival movement, also became clear from an article by Bertone from early June, which noted the "very public political struggle" within the CC. The existence was also noted of tendencies that wished to "question the fundamental socialist choice of the Czechoslovak peoples."²⁰²

The June elections marked a sharp defeat for the PSU, a modest victory for the PCI, and a clear victory for the radical leftist PSIUP (Partito socialista italiano di unit   proletaria).²⁰³ The victory of the PSIUP led to a shift to the Left in the political landscape. While this did not result in a change in the government coalition, it did lead to serious government instability up to 1972.²⁰⁴ Following the June elections, the domestic dynamic in which the PCI was involved was no longer the competition with the PSU over the occupation of the Prague Spring. Rather, the party had to deal

with increasing pressure from the radical components of the contestation movements (the *movimento*) and the PSIUP. The latter party had been able to present itself as the political arm of the student contestation, despite the refusal of the main student organizations to engage in the election campaign and their call for people to abstain from voting.

Compared to the French situation, the Italian contestation movement of 1967–1969 was more radical and more violent. It was more connected to deeply rooted political and societal problems, and lasted longer. In the spring of 1968, however, the challenge to the political and social order was far less acute than it was in France.²⁰⁵ The first student actions in 1967—the occupation of several universities in the North and centre—were to do mostly with student-related issues. Gradually, the movement became more political and, partly under the influence of the events in France and elsewhere, grew into a broad contestation movement against the existing political, socioeconomic and cultural order, domestically and internationally. Tension rose sharply when, in early March, violent clashes occurred between the masses of students and the police forces in Valle Giulia in Rome. Stimulated by the student protests, a new wave of worker unrest started in early 1968 and peaked in March 1968 with a general strike, organized by both the communist and Christian Democratic trade unions (CGIL and CISL).

Two specific features of the Italian situation, in terms of ideology, were the centrality of anti-imperialism as a somewhat amorphous theme, and the importance of Catholic-inspired contestation. Many of the student movements tended towards Maoism, and also among the radicalized workers Maoist ideas were diffused.²⁰⁶ Among the radical Left in Italy, the Chinese Cultural Revolution occurred as the anti-imperialist alternative to the bureaucratic and authoritarian Soviet system. International points of reference were, furthermore, Vietnam and the Marxist movements in Latin America such as Che Guevara in Bolivia. Besides this, many of these groups referred back to pre-1917 forms of revolutionary socialism, as well as to the factory councils in Italy in the 1920s.²⁰⁷ With the exception of the PSIUP, which entertained contacts with many of the student groups, none of the political parties was able to connect to the contestation movement. The reactions to it by the PCI leadership were less negative than those displayed by its French counterpart, partly because the PCI was not being attacked in such a harsh way as the PCF was. More fundamentally, in terms of sources of legitimation the PCI was less alienated from the protest movements than the PCF was. Firstly, the PCI benefited here from its choice,

made since the early 1960s, fully to engage in the anti-imperialist strategy and discourses of the world communist movement, and to link this to Italy's situation in the Cold War. Furthermore, the PCI was able to connect to the protest movements via the theme of anti-fascism, central in the discourses and identities of these movements in Italy in '68–'69. In terms of revolution, however, the PCI, as the PCF, was sharply criticized by these groups for its alleged non-revolutionary character, its gradualism and integration in the liberal-bourgeois political and societal system.

The attitude of the PCI leadership was a mix of a will to understand the movement, attempts to instrumentalize it to the benefit of its own strategy and position on the Left, and rejection of some of its cultural and ideological points of reference. The PCI attempted to incorporate those segments and elements of the movement with which it agreed, whilst ensuring that the party did not come under its influence too much. The PCI's difficult relation to the student movements can be explained on a practical level from the decline of its own youth organization, the FGCI, which, between 1954 and 1968, lost about 70 per cent of its members.²⁰⁸ Shortly before the elections, Longo held talks with a number of leaders of the student movements operating in Rome, including Maoist groups which so far had been perceived by many in the leadership as a threat. While this was undoubtedly a sign of the recognition of the importance of the movements, it was also an attempt by the party to project itself as the voice of the movements in the political arena.²⁰⁹ Those on the Right of the PCI leadership, however, displayed a reaction more similar to that of the PCF: one of downright hostility towards what they called the "far Left." Amendola, in a *Rinascita* article in early June, called for a "struggle on two fronts," directed in equal measure against both government and the (radical segments of the) contestation movement.²¹⁰ The rather hostile reaction against the contestation movement can be explained by the fact that this movement, as in France, fundamentally questioned and challenged what the communist party had traditionally seen as its political and ideological monopoly, namely, the perspective of revolution and a radical upsetting of society.²¹¹ Moreover, they did so with political means and methods that were diametrically opposed to the PCI's choice for integration into the existing institutional system. The party's hostile reactions were furthermore due to the fact that (proto-) Maoist and radical-revolutionary influences weakened the unity of the party. The Ingrao Left in the party strongly argued in favor of a coherent

alliance with the contestation movement, which it considered a genuinely revolutionary movement and the sign of an essentially new situation.²¹²

Although the student movements themselves were not, generally, very interested in the Prague Spring, the Ingrao Left picked up on the combination of both the student movements in Western Europe and the events in Czechoslovakia to question the foundations of the PCI's domestic strategy. Both developments were picked up on as occasions to initiate a debate on the nature of the socialist regimes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Specifically, the factory councils in Czechoslovakia and the popularity among the Italian far Left of concepts such as workers' autonomy and self-management, led Ingrao to call for "socialism from below." At the Central Committee meeting of June, Ingrao explicitly linked the events in Czechoslovakia to a call for the organization of "unitary political organisms" in factories. Furthermore, he linked the positive evaluation of the Prague Spring to the initiation of an (obviously critical) debate on the other socialist countries.²¹³

However, the issue of ideological and strategic links and parallels between the events in Czechoslovakia and the contestation movement in Western Europe had a conservative effect on the PCI. It led to the blocking of the debate on the nature of the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and of socialism generally. The conclusions of the June CC meeting illustrate this: they granted little attention to the party's relationship to the socialist countries, including Czechoslovakia, apart from vague statements such as "a dialogue with all forces of the workers' and democratic movement." There was little real analysis of the situation in Czechoslovakia, as this might have led to an analysis of the situation in other socialist regimes.²¹⁴ Moreover, the Ufficio politico in mid-June decided to "counterattack anti-Sovietism" and called a meeting of the communist MPs to "clarify the party line on Czechoslovakia."²¹⁵ This is where the PCI's substance-related and strategic sympathy for the Prague Spring broke down—when the Prague Spring and the contestation movements were understood as bearing a similar and converging historical meaning, namely, as expressions of the failure of a Soviet-style strategy and a Soviet-aligned concept of socialism.

4.3. *The PCI's low profile in the WCM crisis*

The PCI's retreat from full support for the Prague Spring was further caused by the rising tension in the communist world. The PCI leadership,

as its French counterpart, was more or less convinced by early July that an invasion would take place. Like the latter, it received the Soviet letter dated 11 July, which caused considerable panic.²¹⁶ Unlike the PCF, however, the PCI at this point kept a low profile in the communist world and did not embark upon active, open negotiations. The reasons why the PCI, compared to the PCF, kept a low profile in the communist world were to do generally with its minority position in the WCM, and more specifically with its acute isolation in it at this point. As the danger of an invasion grew, the PCI leadership did not wish to get too deeply involved in the Prague Spring, also because the Czechoslovak reformers at times referred to Gramsci. Moreover, it was difficult for the PCI, with its usual insistence on non-interference in the affairs of other communist parties, actively to interfere in the crisis. Moreover, rather than embarking upon a mission which, if not ambiguous in its motives could be interpreted as such, the Italian communists preferred to keep their hands free. The Soviets, in very much a similar way as they did vis-à-vis the French, exercised pressure on the Italians to influence Dubček. In Moscow, the Soviets undertook a last attempt to persuade Galluzzi and G.C. Pajetta into talking with Dubček on their behalf. Ponomarev suggested that if the PCI were to intervene with the French and the Hungarians, "something could be obtained, as your party has influence."²¹⁷

More acutely, the PCI considered it too risky to play an active role in the crisis of the world communist movement because of its relative isolation in the context of the on-going preparations for the world communist conference. There were plenty of signs of an anti-revisionist campaign being under way, aimed not only at the CPCS but also at the PCI. This shift of atmosphere in the world communist movement preceded the actual, open crisis between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.²¹⁸ From February to June 1968, there were regular meetings in Budapest in preparation for the conference. At the meeting in late February, the atmosphere grew grim and the room for maneuver of autonomist parties such as the PCI tightened.²¹⁹ Yugoslavia abstained from further collaboration, and the positions of the Soviets, East Germans and Polish were increasingly rigid and their alliance increasingly tight.²²⁰ The PCI now stood virtually alone in its critical and autonomist positions. First and foremost, it lost its battle over the *allargamento*: the proposal to invite non-communist groups was definitely rejected at the meeting of late February.²²¹ Furthermore, the plenary session held in late April decided that the conference should adopt a series of documents

which would be binding: a general resolution, a declaration on Vietnam, and a declaration on peace.²²² In particular, relations between the Italian and Polish parties deteriorated. In his speeches Berlinguer touched on the sensitive issue of cultural freedom in the socialist countries, subtly implying that the PCI (and the other West European communist parties) might turn the discussion of this theme into a condition for further support for unity in the communist world.²²³ In response, though without referring explicitly to the PCI and the CPCS, Kliszko, of the Polish delegation, attacked revisionism and “autonomism.”²²⁴

In June, an open rift occurred at the Budapest meetings between, on the one hand, Czechoslovakia, Romania, PCI, PCF, PCE, and smaller out-of-government communist parties, and, on the other hand, a “troika” of the Soviet Union, Poland and East Germany, joined cautiously by Hungary. The Italian delegation noted that the troika attempted to make the whole communist world agree upon their conception of relations between socialist states and communist parties, and upon their renewed emphasis on ideological correctness.²²⁵ Other signs of the tightening atmosphere in the communist world more generally were the persistent rumors, spread especially by the Romanians, about Soviet–East German–Polish plans to create a new “permanent centre” of the communist world, in the historical tradition of the Cominform and Comintern.²²⁶ The fear of a new anti-revisionist campaign, whether or not institutionalized in a permanent structure, and its position as a likely target, led the PCI to downplay, at least in public, its substance-related support of the Prague Spring. Instead, it focused on formalistic arguments, related to party autonomy.

While it did not engage, as the PCF did, in a diplomatic campaign, the PCI did strongly argue against an invasion and reaffirm its support for the Prague Spring on its two encounters with Soviet delegations in this period.²²⁷ Both of these—one in Rome in late June–early July, the other in Moscow in mid-July—had been planned beforehand and the PCI put Czechoslovakia on the agenda in a last instance. During the visit to Italy of a delegation of the Soviet party in late June–early July, the Italian delegation was remarkably assertive in general and went relatively far in its content-related defense of the Prague Spring. Longo met with Kirilenko on 26 and 27 June, and a broader meeting of the two delegations took place on 9 July.²²⁸ At this second meeting, importantly, the Czechoslovak issue was broadened to general questions of democracy and pluralism. The talks at this meeting deviated from the usual polite protocol: the Italians directly

asked the Soviets about their policies on intellectuals and asked for “clarifications” regarding party democracy and party discipline in the Soviet Union. Pajetta and Longo clearly stated that the PCI had other views on these issues.²²⁹

Italian and Soviet communist delegations met in Moscow on 17 July. While Rochet was meeting with Brezhnev, Pajetta and Galluzzi met with Suslov, Kirilenko and Ponomarev.²³⁰ The Soviet delegation on this occasion drew a very negative picture of the situation in Czechoslovakia. The Soviets were rather straightforward as to their intentions: affirming that the situation in Czechoslovakia was getting worse, they stated that it had become impossible to “remain passive” and the “hostile elements” needed to be defeated. The Italian delegation made clear its disagreement regarding the nature of the Prague Spring, although it admitted that the Soviet preoccupations were “legitimate.” The Italians stressed that the CPCS leadership needed to be supported in their continuation of the current policy line. They also invoked the strategic argument regarding the “international balance of forces,” and the argument of autonomy. Pajetta here made it clear that the PCI would openly disagree with a military invasion. As they did vis-  -vis the PCF, the Soviets pressured the PCI to align with their position, though less strongly so on some points.²³¹ The latter resisted, more resolutely than did the French. The Soviet delegation explicitly pressured the Italians to condemn publicly the 2000 Words Manifesto. The Italian delegation responded that the manifesto could be “strongly criticized,” but insisted that there were “sincere people among the writers.”²³²

4.4. *Diversification in the leadership*

The PCI’s rather low profile in the world communist crisis was also to do with disagreements inside the leadership. Compared to the PCF, the difference was probably not that internal disagreement was greater, but rather that a larger number of leaders were involved in the analysis and the decisions (the Direzione debates compared to the smaller Bureau politique and the individual character of Rochet’s initiatives). The substance-related support of the Prague Spring by the PCI leadership *en bloc* broke down over the 2000 Words Manifesto. Following the publication of the manifesto, Galluzzi was urgently sent to Prague, where he spoke with, among others, J.   pa  ek. His conclusion was not a critique of either the most radical segments of the revival movement or of the conservatives in the CPCS, but a pessimistic view on Dub  ek’s abilities to hold a centrist line between the two.²³³

However, criticism of the manifesto itself was expressed through an (anonymous) article in *Rinascita*. With this article, the party took its distance from the manifesto without formally condemning it. Particularly hard to accept for the PCI was the manifesto's very critical analysis of past communist rule: "...the entire judgment of the past which it holds seems in an extremely bitter way to minimize or even ignore the value of the historical choice for socialism that Czechoslovakia made 20 years ago..."²³⁴ Also Pajetta later on affirmed that "many of the 2000 Words were certainly not ours."²³⁵

Upon the return of Pajetta and Galluzzi from Moscow after their talks with the Soviets in mid-July, an extraordinary meeting of the Direzione took place in a crisis atmosphere. There was the understanding that an invasion was almost certain: as Pajetta put it, "there is the will to cause a rupture and the plans for such action have already been drawn."²³⁶ Moreover, Longo had been informed by the Yugoslavs that "all plans were made."²³⁷ As to the question of how the PCI should react to the escalation of the crisis, there was a general consensus in the Direzione that some sort of public statement should be made.²³⁸ However, important disagreements existed as to how to value the Prague Spring, and, specifically, on the question of "anti-socialist forces" inside the party and state apparatus. Colombi clearly stated that he had no confidence in the Czechoslovak leaders and that there was a danger of undermining socialism. He agreed with the Soviet analysis of the developments, although he did not approve of the Soviet methods and the Warsaw letter. While Amendola also now had worries regarding the situation in Czechoslovakia,²³⁹ A. Occhetto argued that there definitely were "counter-revolutionary forces" operating in Czechoslovakia.²⁴⁰ On the other hand, Ingrao, Berlinguer and U. Terracini still wholeheartedly defended the Prague Spring.²⁴¹

Following this meeting, the Direzione issued a statement in support of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. It defended the Prague Spring and argued against any kind of intervention.²⁴² It referred to substance-related arguments ("our solidarity with the process of democratic renewal," "the construction of a socialist democracy"), formalistic arguments (autonomy, respect for the principle of non-interference), and strategic arguments ("the unity of all communist and progressive forces in the struggle against imperialism," "the construction of a system of peaceful coexistence"). Colombi had voted against the final resolution, despite especially Longo's attempts to persuade him otherwise. There was an agreement not to make Colombi's dissent public.²⁴³ In a separate statement the PCI declared itself

to be in favor of the French proposal to hold a conference on Czechoslovakia, even though, as was noted on the Direzione meeting, this went against its line of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other parties.²⁴⁴

There were voices in the party leadership arguing for a more active and visible position in the crisis of the communist world, but the motives behind these proposals lay far apart. Galluzzi was in favor of an open common policy with the French, for which there seemed to have been little enthusiasm among the others.²⁴⁵ Longo suggested putting pressure on Dubček by pointing at the “dangers against which he has to struggle.”²⁴⁶ Pajetta repeated his earlier idea that the PCI would send an official delegation to Prague; this was firmly opposed by Longo.²⁴⁷ There were requests for more active support from the Czechoslovaks themselves, to which the PCI responded with a mix of caution and support. Most importantly, the CPCS sent an invitation to the PCI for a high-level bilateral meeting in Prague. Longo suggested not traveling to Prague until after the Čierna talks—which was accepted by the Direzione.²⁴⁸ An invitation by the East German SED, by contrast, was accepted and Pajetta was sent to Berlin in early August.²⁴⁹ On the other hand, the PCI agreed to attend the CPCS 14th Congress, planned for early September. As the congress had become controversial even before it was held, this marked a clear sign of support.²⁵⁰ The PCI also agreed with the request of the Czechoslovak television, headed by Pelikán, to interview Longo in Rome on issues such as “modern socialism,” the value of the Czechoslovak experience for West European communist parties, and the modes of interaction between communist parties.²⁵¹

CONCLUDING REMARKS

While the PCI certainly displayed more enthusiasm for the Prague Spring than the PCF did, the former party's support also had its limits. The two parties shared a few basic motives in their defense of the Prague Spring: the advocacy of a level of communist party autonomy in the world communist movement (the formalistic support of the Prague Spring), and the urgent need to avoid a military invasion which would damage the image of communism in the West and exacerbate the situation in the world communist movement. Beyond these two motives, the interests of the two parties in the Czechoslovak crisis differed. The PCI initially supported the Prague Spring as a project and as an example of a democratic form of

socialism, useful to communist parties in the West. Moreover, it wished to understand the Prague Spring as the first example of a European development towards the rise of democratic forms of socialism across Europe in the context of *détente* and the symmetric loosening of bloc cohesion.

It was foremost the political situation in Italy that pressured the PCI towards a positive evaluation of the Prague Spring, to a greater extent than was the case for the PCF in France. In the context of the election campaign of April–May, the PCI engaged in a competition for the positive occupation of the Prague Spring with the socialist PSU, which strongly identified with it and openly speculated on the possibility of a Soviet invasion. However, the PCI's positive evaluation of the Prague Spring came under pressure when the far Left in Italy interpreted the events in Czechoslovakia and the contestation movements in Western Europe as two sides of a coin and as reflecting not only the break-up of the European status quo but also the failure of Soviet-inspired models for socialism. The more or less unanimous support by the PCI leadership for the Prague Spring broke down in the evaluation of the most critical expressions of the revival movement, notably the 2000 Words Manifesto.

The PCF, by contrast, had great difficulty in relating to the Prague Spring. At most, Waldeck Rochet and others in the leadership such as Kanapa and Frachon initially displayed benevolent tolerance towards some elements of the Prague Spring as a reform movement led by the communist party; this was by no means shared by the entire Bureau politique. The PCF was limited in its support for the Prague Spring because it raised the issue of Stalinism and de-Stalinization, and because it did not correspond to the party's own concept of "orthodox" socialism. Nonetheless, it continued to present the Prague Spring as a socialist and revolutionary development, although rather because it was pressured by other actors on the Left who understood the Prague Spring either as a development towards (liberal) democracy or as a non-revolutionary movement. The limits to its support of the Prague Spring were furthermore connected to the May '68 events in France and the perspective of the possibility of the upsetting of the bipolar European order, which it seemed to suggest. The PCF refused to understand the May events in France as revolutionary, firstly because it did not control the radical student protest movement, and secondly because the Soviets, having less interest in the emergence of a "non-orthodox" socialist regime in France than in the continuation of Gaullist *détente*, pressured the PCF into containing this movement. Thus, the PCF needed to deny that either the

events in France or those in Czechoslovakia had the potential of upsetting the European status quo.

By June, the interpretations of the Prague Spring came to be largely (in the case of the PCI) or entirely (in the case of the PCF) subordinate to the mounting crisis in the world communist movement. Paradoxically, as tension increased the PCI, which had initially been more enthusiastic about the Prague Spring, played down this enthusiasm, and the PCF, which had been more skeptical, undertook an intra-communist diplomatic campaign to prevent the invasion. Rochet considered it to be his special responsibility to avoid a military outcome to the crisis. Rochet's talks with both Brezhnev and Dubček were not intended as a mediating campaign between two equal partners; rather, having understood that the Soviets would invade Czechoslovakia, the French communist leader put pressure on Dubček to change his course. However, his endeavor should not be understood as a Soviet-instigated mission, and Soviet and PCF interests in the matter did not coincide, as the former from mid-July onwards no longer seriously envisaged other options than an invasion. Instead, Rochet's initiatives, and in particular his proposal to hold a European conference of communist parties, brought the PCF into acute conflict with the Soviets. The fact that Rochet, through his parallel diplomacy, put the PCF in an isolated position in the world communist movement, demonstrated that his vision of loyal internationalism was an unrealistic one, which ignored the furthest implications of Soviet dominance.

NOTES

- 1 Held, "Le face-à-face de Prague," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 29/7/68.
- 2 Some of the analyses elaborated in the literature on the Prague Spring and the Soviet invasion, written in the 1970s and 1980s, remain very valuable, primarily Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*; Dawisha, *The Kremlin and the Prague Spring*. For memoirs of Prague Spring protagonists and Czechoslovak émigrés, see Dubček, *Hope Dies Last*; Hájek, *Dix ans après*; Mlynář, *Nightfrost in Prague*; and Pelikán, *S'ils me tuent*. A very useful recent archive-based study on the Prague Spring and the invasion is Williams, *The Prague Spring and its aftermath*.
- 3 This distinction, between a top-led reform movement and a more spontaneous revival movement, has been made in much of the literature. See, for example, Pehe, "Introduction," in Pehe, *The Prague Spring*, pp. 1–7; Grémion, *Paris–Prague*, chapter 1.

- 4 Kusin, *The Intellectual Origins*, p. 17.
- 5 The events of 1956 had already given rise to a re-awakening of intellectual criticism and creativity, from which a straight line can be drawn to the Prague Spring twelve years later. Kusin, *The Intellectual Origins*, pp. 19–27.
- 6 For more detail on the economic crisis see Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 57–59.
- 7 Their programme for economic reform in 1964 introduced a number of liberal market elements but was also inspired by the Polish, Hungarian and Yugoslav experiences. Kusin, *The Intellectual Origins*, pp. 86–90.
- 8 Bartošek, “Revoluce proti byrokratismu?” (Revolution against bureaucracy?), *Rude Pravo*, 18/7/1968.
- 9 Gramsci's main works were translated into Czech from the late 1950s onwards. Kusin, *The Intellectual Origins*, p. 45.
- 10 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, p. 102.
- 11 Kusin, *The Intellectual Origins*, pp. 80–81.
- 12 The CPS, which had not shown an independent line previously, went through a crisis in the mid-1960s in which critical voices asking for de-Stalinization emerged. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 49–56.
- 13 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 60–61.
- 14 On the Slánský trials and the revision see Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 32–34.
- 15 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 157–158.
- 16 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 166–171.
- 17 It is in this context that Brezhnev is supposed to have pronounced his famous phrase “It is your affair.” Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, p. 169. On Brezhnev's visit to Prague see also the interview by M. Kun with the Soviet Ambassador to Prague Chervonenko, in Kun, *Prague Spring, Prague Fall*, pp. 7–10.
- 18 While the other candidates proposed by the reformists (Šmrkavský and Šik) were not acceptable to Novotný, his own candidates (among others M. Vaculík and Lenart) were not acceptable to the reformists. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 176–177, and Chervonenko's testimony in Kun, *Prague Spring, Prague Fall*, pp. 11–12.
- 19 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 334–337.
- 20 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 341–356.
- 21 More detail on the Action Programme can be found in Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 217–221.
- 22 Barnard, *Pluralism, Socialism*, p. 38.
- 23 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 366–369.
- 24 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, p. 208.
- 25 For a detailed account of this see Williams, *The Prague Spring*, pp. 210–225.
- 26 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 215–216.
- 27 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 414–418.
- 28 More detail can be found in Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 441–443.
- 29 Golan, *Reform Rule*, pp. 186–187.

- 30 In mid-March, the Slovak National Council adopted the proposal for symmetric federalism. The Action Programme, once again more careful in its terms, declared the intention to pursue the federalization of the state and economic equalization. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, p. 459.
- 31 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, p. 487.
- 32 A similar view can be found in Kusin, *The Intellectual Origins*, pp. 73–75.
- 33 On this see, especially, Kusin, *The Intellectual Origins*, pp. 98–101.
- 34 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 617–619. More below on the Budapest meetings in the spring of 1968.
- 35 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 620–627.
- 36 Navratil, *Prague Spring*, pp. 108–110. On the question of the loan, see also Dub  ek, *Hope Dies Last*, pp. 158–159.
- 37 For example, Dub  ek postponed the planned local elections to the end of June, as he feared a victory of the radical-reformist tendency. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, p. 207.
- 38 Different interpretations exist in the literature as to how divided or united the party leadership was in April–July 1968, and to what extent it was in control of the revival movement. Some authors have stressed the disagreements inside the party leadership and the challenges posed to the Dub  ek line from different sides (see, for example, Williams, *The Prague Spring*, pp. 69–70 and 84–91). Skilling, on the other hand, emphasises that “by the CC Plenum of early April it had gained authority among public opinion and consensus among its ranks.” Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, p. 196. However, the “taking control” by the central leadership can be understood as the “conservative backlash” which writer Vacul  k denounced (see below).
- 39 For a translation of the letter see Navratil, *Prague Spring*, pp. 76–77.
- 40 Navratil, *Prague Spring*, pp. 156–166.
- 41 Other new political groups were the Academic Council of Students in Prague, and the Club of Critical Thought, a part of the Writers' Union. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, p. 202.
- 42 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 346–347.
- 43 For an English translation of the “Two Thousand Words that Belong to Workers, Farmers, Officials, Scientists, Artists, and Everybody” and commentary see Navratil, *Prague Spring*, pp. 177–181. On the conservative pressure to which the letter responded, see the testimony by Vacul  k in Kun, *Prague Spring, Prague Fall*, pp. 199–208.
- 44 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, pp. 272–279.
- 45 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, p. 319.
- 46 Italian translation in Milan Weiner, “Una conferenza normale,” *Literarny listy*, 14/3/68. (The title of the article refers to the Budapest preparatory meeting of February 1968 for the planned world communist conference). Translation by E. Berlinguer, to be found in APCI, Fund Berlinguer, folder 51 “Budapest, 26 febbraio–5 marzo,” 2.
- 47 See the discussion of these elements in Kramer, “The Czechoslovak Crisis,” pp. 121–135.
- 48 For an analysis of the breakdown of Soviet trust in the Czechoslovak leaders,

- which takes into account personal elements, see Williams, *The Prague Spring*, pp. 63–111.
- 49 On the events in Poland, see Eisler, “March 1968 in Poland,” in Fink, Gassert, Junker, 1968. *The World transformed*, pp. 237–252.
- 50 Kramer, “The Czechoslovak Crisis,” p. 144.
- 51 Kramer, “New Interpretations,” pp. 5–6.
- 52 Kramer, “Moldavia, Romania.”
- 53 Dawisha, *The Kremlin*, p. 33.
- 54 Dawisha, *The Kremlin*, p. 351.
- 55 According to Mlynář, Brezhnev told him at the Moscow talks following the invasion: “...There will be no war. Comrade Tito and Comrade Ceaușescu will say their piece, and so will Comrade Berlinguer. Well, and what of it? You are courting the communist movement in Western Europe, but that won’t amount to anything for fifty years.” Mlynář, *Nightfrost*, p. 241. Suslov seems to have accorded more importance to the reactions in the world communist movement. Dawisha, *The Kremlin*, p. 378.
- 56 McGinn, “The politics of collective inaction,” in *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 1999, nr. 1.3, pp. 111–138.
- 57 Dawisha, *The Kremlin*, p. 115.
- 58 In all, Brezhnev wrote six letters to Dubček during the spring and summer. While the first two, written in March–April, were still relatively friendly in tone, the subsequent letters were increasingly threatening. See Navratil, *Prague Spring*, p. 98.
- 59 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia’s interrupted revolution*, pp. 208–209.
- 60 Differences among the Czechoslovak leaders came to the surface at this meeting. Excerpts of the report of the meeting translated into English with comments can be found in Navratil, *Prague Spring*, pp. 114–125.
- 61 There were also attempts at manipulating public opinion against Dubček, for instance by a leaflet campaign. Dawisha, *The Kremlin*, pp. 128–129.
- 62 Kramer, “The Czechoslovak Crisis,” p. 133.
- 63 Brezhnev’s letter to Dubček, in English translation, can be found in Navratil, *Prague Spring*, pp. 148–149.
- 64 The attitude of the reformist CPCS leadership at the time has caused much controversy. On the general line of Dubček’s reactions to the external pressures, see Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia’s interrupted revolution*, pp. 295–304.
- 65 In this period, the PCF also proposed a pan-European conference of communist parties to discuss the Czechoslovak crisis; see below.
- 66 On the Warsaw meeting as a crucial moment in the decision-making process see Kramer, “The Czechoslovak Crisis,” p. 147. Gordon Skilling has expressed more doubts on this: Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia’s interrupted revolution*, pp. 726–730.
- 67 An English translation and annotation of the Warsaw Letter can be found in Navratil, *Prague Spring*, pp. 234–238.
- 68 Dubček, *Hope Dies Last*, p. 163. For the West European CPs, see below.
- 69 Kramer, “The Czechoslovak Crisis,” p. 149.
- 70 Quoted in Kramer, “The Czechoslovak Crisis,” p. 149.

- 71 Moreover, delivery of the letter was delayed by Soviet Ambassador Chervonenko. Navratil, *Prague Spring*, p. 384–387.
- 72 Navratil, *Prague Spring*, p. 345.
- 73 A major document that polarised positions was the so-called Kaspar report. Furthermore, A. Indra and D. Kolder, conservative Presidium members, proposed a “Memorandum on the political situation,” which led to a break in the Presidium. Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia’s interrupted revolution*, p. 329.
- 74 The “Letter of invitation” was only rediscovered in Soviet archives after 1991. It is translated in Navratil, *Prague Spring*, pp. 324–325.
- 75 The following is based on a very useful discussion in Fejt  , *The French Communist Party*, pp. 86–93.
- 76 Fejt  , *The French Communist Party*, p. 157.
- 77 This is discussed, on the basis of CPCS archives, in Barto  ek, *Les Aveux*, pp. 173–176.
- 78 For more on A. London see chapter 7. Raymond Guyot had many personal contacts in the East European regimes, played a crucial role in defining the party’s internationalism in this period, and was a member of all the important international delegations.
- 79 For more on this see Barto  ek, *Les Aveux*, p. 163.
- 80 Gr  mion, *Paris–Prague*, p. 124.
- 81 For a more elaborate discussion see Barto  ek, *Les Aveux*, chapter 2.
- 82 For the analysis of the PCF, I draw on primary sources (archives and press material) as well as literature. For the public positions of the PCF with regard to the Prague Spring, I have consulted the most important of the party’s daily and weekly papers, including *Humanit  *, *Les lettres fran  aises* (LLF) and *La nouvelle critique* (LNC). For a view on the internal development of this position, I have consulted the archives of the main decision-making bodies; see the annex.
- 83 The regular PCF reporter on Czechoslovakia was Philippa Hentg  s, known to be Soviet-friendly; from April she was joined in Prague by “special envoy” Antoine Acquaviva, who was more reform-oriented and generally covered the Prague Spring in a more positive way. According to Daix, Acquaviva was sent to Prague after lobbying by himself and P. Noirot. Daix, *Les h  r  tiques du PCF*, p. 242.
- 84 For a similar view see Gr  mion, *Paris–Prague*, p. 65.
- 85 For a similar view see Deli, *De Budapest*, p. 91.
- 86 “‘Nous ne voulons pas n’importe quelle d  mocratie mais la d  mocratie socialiste’, d  clare Dub   ek devant le CC,” Hentg  s, *Humanit  *, 2/4/68, p. 4.
- 87 Acquaviva, “Le CC du Parti communiste t  ch  que ouvre ce matin une importante session,” *Humanit  *, 1/4/68, p. 3.
- 88 Quoted in Gr  mion, *Paris–Prague*, p. 67.
- 89 Hentg  s, *Humanit  *, 2/4/68, p. 4.
- 90 APCF, BP, 1/4/68, pt. 2.
- 91 P. and P. Hentg  s, “Note sur les circonstances qui amen  rent des changements en T  ch  coslovaquie,” 19/1/68. APCF, box “T  ch  coslovaquie –Plissonnier,” folder III, file 2.
- 92 APCF, Sec, 19/3/68, pt. 3.

- 93 *Humanité*, 20/4/68, pp. 1–3; Deli, *De Budapest*, pp. 92–93.
- 94 APCF, Sec, 2/4/68.
- 95 Frachon, leader of the CGT, was, though of the same generation as Thorez and Duclos, considered one of the more “progressive” among the central leadership; already in 1956 he had protested, with Rochet and others, against the lack of explanation provided by the Thorez leadership on the 20th CPSU Congress. Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, p. 91.
- 96 See also the well-informed P.G., “Prague 68: quand le PCF a failli exploser,” *L’événement du jeudi*, 13/8/68, pp. 38–41.
- 97 In his memoirs, published in 1972, Duclos wrote that at that point “the Czechoslovak crisis [...] had reached a point where the concerns of the advocates of the socialist regime were legitimate.” Duclos, *Mémoires 1959–1969*, vol. 6: *Et la lutte continue*, p. 400.
- 98 P.G., “Prague 68: quand le PCF a failli exploser,” pp. 38–41; Streiff, *Kanapa*, pp. 437, 463, 500–504.
- 99 Bartošek, *Les Aveux*, p. 186.
- 100 Waldeck Rochet, “Discours au CC, 19 avril 1968,” in “Tchécoslovaquie 68. Documents,” *La nouvelle critique*, special issue, September 1968, p. 4.
- 101 Waldeck Rochet, “Discours au CC, 19 avril 1968,” p. 4.
- 102 Grémion, *Paris–Prague*, pp. 82–83 and 100–101. Also Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 500.
- 103 APCF, BP, 1/4/68; see also Verdès-Leroux, *Le réveil*, p. 211.
- 104 Aragon, because of his network of contacts among East European intellectuals and artists, which went back to the interwar period, functioned as their “ambassador” in France. With his wife, the writer Elsa Troilet, he had many personal contacts in Czechoslovakia and often visited the country. Grémion, *Paris–Prague*, p. 56, and Bartošek, *Les Aveux*, p. 161.
- 105 Daix, *Tout mon temps*, p. 438. The following points are taken from the articles in the *Journal de Prague* series in *LLF*: Daix, “Notes pour comprendre les écrivains tchécoslovaques,” *Lettres françaises*, 3/4/68; idem, “Ce Printemps de Prague –I,” *LLF*, 10/4/68; idem, “Ce Printemps de Prague –II,” *LLF*, 17/4/68.
- 106 *LLF*, however, did not publish the 2000 Words Manifesto. According to Daix, this was due to pressure from the party. Daix, *Les hérétiques*, p. 242.
- 107 Amidst the massive amount of literature and interpretations on May ’68 in France, I refer here to the various contributions in Dreyfus–Armand, Frank, Lévy, Zancarini-Fournel, *Les années 68*; and Mouriaux, Percheron, Prost, Tartakowsky, *1968*. For an interpretation of the sociological causes behind the ’68 student movements and the intellectual roots, see, for example, Gilcher–Holtey, “May 1968 in France.”
- 108 These forms of critique had been developed from the late 1950s in journals such as *Socialisme ou Barbarie*, *Arguments*, *Internationale situationniste*.
- 109 There were three Trotskyite tendencies in 1968. One was the Ligue communiste révolutionnaire, a fusion of the Parti communiste internationaliste and the Jeunes communistes révolutionnaires, influenced by the works of E. Mandel and the French section of the Fourth International. Another was La Ligue communiste, which represented the Franck tradition. It was led by A. Krivine and edited, from August 1968 onwards, the bimonthly *Rouge*. The third was the Parti

- des travailleurs, set up in 1966, which placed itself in the Lambert tradition and was led by D. Gluckstein. For more on French Trotskyism see Belden Fields, *Trotskyism and Maoism*, chapters 2 and 3; Alexander, *International Trotskyism*.
- 110 Some important Maoist groups in 1968 were: "Communistes m.l.," the student group Union des jeunes communistes marxistes-léninistes, and the Mouvement communiste français, recognised by Beijing. The first group had partly developed out of the proto-Maoist tendencies in the UEC cell of Rue d'Ulm, and was influenced by Althusser. Furthermore, it was well known that François Billioux, a member of the Bureau politique of the PCF, had "Chinese" sympathies. See Dreyfus, *PCF*, pp. 150–153. For more detail on the "French Chinese" before 1968 see Fejtő, *The French Communist Party*, pp. 149–154. See also, though with emphasis on the 1970s, Hourmant, *Le désenchantement des clercs*, pp. 17–26.
- 111 Intellectuals close to the PSU wrote for journals such as *Le nouvel observateur* and *Esprit*. On the PSU in 1968 see Fisera, "Le PSU face à son histoire," pp. 178–215; Bernstein, "Les forces politiques," pp. 485–486.
- 112 In the elections of June 1968, the party rose from 2.2 per cent (1965) to 3.9 per cent, which was the highest it ever obtained.
- 113 Fisera, "Le PSU face à son histoire," pp. 178–215.
- 114 French and other West European Trotskyite groups proposed the sending of "international brigades," an offer which North Vietnam declined. Dreyfus-Armand, Portes, "Les interactions internationales," pp. 49–68.
- 115 The Marchais article can be found in *Humanité*, 3/5/68. This was also the general interpretation in Duclos, *Anarchistes de hier et d'aujourd'hui*.
- 116 On the PCF's responses to the student movements and on its strategy in May–June 1968, see Tartakowsky, "Le Pcf en mai–juin 1968," pp. 141–163, although the analysis does not illuminate on the issue of Soviet pressure. A different view, which emphasises the revolutionary aspects of PCF strategy, is defended in Becker, "Communisme et Gaullisme dans la crise de Mai 68." See, furthermore, Goldstein, "Le PCF du 3 mai au 6 juin," in *Les temps modernes*, pp. 282–838; Lazar, "Révoltes, révolutions et Pcf en Mai 68."
- 117 A similar view in Moullec, "Mai 1968, le PCF et l'Union Soviétique."
- 118 Bell, Criddle, *The French Communist Party*, p. 91.
- 119 Tartakowsky, "Le Pcf en mai–juin," pp. 149–150. A similar view can be found in Hincker, *Le Parti communiste*, p. 50.
- 120 On the FGDS in the May 1968 crisis, see Sadoun, "Un processus fermé: les socialistes dans la FGDS," in Mouriaux, 1968, pp. 164–177.
- 121 Tartakowsky, "Le Pcf en mai–juin," p. 153; Hincker, *Le Parti communiste au carrefour*, p. 72.
- 122 These included the automatic adaptation of wages to inflation, the decrease of working hours, and the lowering of the pension age.
- 123 The agreement was also rejected by the CGT sections of Billancourt. For more detail on the Grenelle agreements see Zancarini-Fournel, "Retour sur 'Grenelle'," pp. 443–460.
- 124 Tartakowsky, "Le Pcf en mai–juin," p. 154.
- 125 The PCF dropped from 22.5 per cent in 1967 to about 20 per cent; the combined

- vote for the FGDS and SFIO dropped from 18.9 per cent in 1967 to 16.5 per cent.
- 126 Most important was the resignation of A. Barjonet as CGT leader on 26 May.
- 127 Robrieux, *La secte*, p. 84.
- 128 At a meeting in late May, Soviet ambassador V. Zoryn “reminded” Guyot of the “international importance” of the French events. Moullec, “Mai 1968, le Pcf et l’Union soviétique,” pp. 159–162.
- 129 The PCF leaders had asked the Soviets at the above-mentioned meetings that the Soviet press would portray de Gaulle in a more negative way than usual. Moullec, “Mai 1968, le PCF et l’Union soviétique,” p. 164.
- 120 A copy and translation in Italian of the *Novosti* article can be found in APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 55.5.
- 131 “Vermerk über ein gespräch mit dem genossen Paul Laurent, Sekretär der Föderation Paris der FKP, am 4 Juli 1968,” SAPMDB, ZPA-SED, DY/30/IV A20/20, 457. Seguy and Frachon, at a meeting with CC member Norden on 6/7, complained about the lack of support from the socialist countries for the CGT, with the exception of the Soviet Union. “Vermerk über ein Gespräch mit dem gen. G. Seguy und B. Frachon am 6 Juli 1968,” SAPMDB, ZPA-SED, DY/30/IV A 20/20.
- 132 “Vermerk über ein Gespräch des Gen. H. Axen mit Gen. R. Guyot, am 29/7/1968,” Berlin, 9/8/68, SAPMDB, ZPA-SED, DY/30/IV A 20/20.
- 133 A hand-written record of the meeting between Berlinguer and Galluzzi with Guyot, Kanapa and Denis can be found in APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 55.2.
- 134 The *Le Monde* articles on Czechoslovakia in 1968–1969 by correspondent M. Tatu are published in Tatu, *L’hérésie impossible*.
- 135 See also Grémion, *Paris–Prague*, p. 57–58. Deli comes to a similar conclusion on the general responses to the Prague Spring by the French Left. Deli, *De Budapest*, pp. 293–304.
- 136 The approach used here is similar to Grémion’s analysis of the “game of political interpretations” of the Prague Spring on the French Left. Grémion, *Paris–Prague*, p. 65. Grémion, however, focuses on different interpretative tensions: revisionism, culture and self-management. As points of reference for gaining an idea of the reactions to the Prague Spring by actors of the Left, we consider, next to the PCF press introduced above: communist intellectuals in the party (for which I have consulted *Les lettres françaises* of L. Aragon and P. Daix); the positions of the FGDS and the SFIO (for which I have read *Le Monde*); *Le nouvel observateur* (LNO) and *Les temps modernes* of J. P. Sartre and S. de Beauvoir as representatives of the critical intellectual Left; and Trotskyite groups as representatives of the far Left (*Lutte ouvrière*).
- 138 Elements of this can be found in Lentin, “Lénine revu par Montesquieu,” LNO, 3/4/68; Held, “Le face-à-face de Prague,” LNO, 29/7/68.
- 138 “Menaces soviétiques contre la Tchécoslovaquie,” *Lutte ouvrière*, 3/7/68, p. 1.
- 139 Hentgès, “La Tchécoslovaquie a toujours considéré ses liens politiques et militaires avec les pays socialistes comme la garantie de son indépendance,” *Humanité*, 17/7/68, p. 3.
- 140 Deli, *De Budapest*, p. 94. Daix, however, openly supported the 2000 Words. Grémion, *Paris–Prague*, p. 87.

- 141 For example in Held, "Le face-à-face de Prague," LNO, 29/7/68; it was stated here that "Dubček likes the authors of the 2000 Words."
- 142 Although generally supportive of the Prague Spring, *Les Temps modernes* did consider socialism to be in danger in Czechoslovakia.
- 143 "The Czechoslovak reformers know that they find themselves in *terra incognita*. Everything remains to be imagined and constructed [...]. They resemble the French revolutionaries of May [...]. The world divided between neo-capitalists and neo-Stalinists risks one day to be upset by this—and in a good way [...]," Held "Le face-à-face de Prague," LNO, 29/7/68.
- 144 A similar point has been emphasised by Grémion, although referring to cultural aspects rather than strategic ones: the PCF entirely ignored the wish of the revival movement to return to (pan-) European culture. Grémion, *Paris-Prague*, p. 125. However, his argument that this was the case for the entire French Left is not, in my view, correct; this is demonstrated by the line taken by *Le nouvel observateur*.
- 145 "Départ d'unités soviétiques qui ont participé aux manœuvres militaires en Tchécoslovaquie," *Humanité*, 16/7/68, p. 3.
- 146 Also Bartošek argues that the PCF leadership from early July on entertained fear that an invasion was being planned and that plans for a new government were being made. Bartošek, *Paris-Prague*, p. 187.
- 147 Letter in French translation, marked "Confidential," s.n. (but CPSU) to PCF, 11/7/68 in APCF, file "Événements en Tchécoslovaquie," box 2, folder 3. What followed was an extremely dark picture of the developments in Czechoslovakia (the "advance of rightist elements," etc...).
- 148 "Les dirigeants de cinq pays socialistes réunis à Varsovie," *Humanité*, 15/7/68, p. 3; "Varsovie: fin de la rencontre des cinq pays socialistes," *Humanité*, 16/7/68, p. 3. *Humanité* published the Warsaw letter only on 19 July, together with the response to it of the CPCS.
- 149 Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 501.
- 150 Vigreux has exaggerated Rochet's sympathy for the Prague Spring and his "true defence of the project in the communist world," Vigreux, *Waldeck Rochet*, pp. 272–273.
- 151 "Entretien du cde. Komocsin, Hongrie, avec Waldeck Rochet," 4/5/68, 7 pp., dactylo, in APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 12, file 2.
- 152 This was the case according to the Czechoslovak intelligence services in France. Bartošek, *Les Aveux*, p. 185.
- 153 Oral Report Pajetta, APCI, Direzione (henceforth Dir), 17/7, 02–0798; see also below.
- 154 The records of both Moscow meetings taken from the notes of Kanapa, who was present, are published in (Anonymous but Kanapa), *Kremlin-PCF*, pp. 51–72.
- 155 In the event that they decided upon an invasion, Brezhnev added, they would inform the PCF "in opportune time." *Kremlin-PCF*, p. 72.
- 156 It was Rochet's request that his meeting with Dubček took place after his meeting with the Soviet leaders. For the Kanapa notes of the Prague meeting see *Kremlin-PCF*, pp. 77–96. As we shall see below, the records of the Rochet–Dubček meeting became a matter of great controversy, and it was in

this context that they were published by *Humanité* in 1970. The records of the Rochet–Dubček meeting were also accessible in the PCF archives when I consulted them: “Notes prises au cours de l’entretien entre Waldeck Rochet et Dubček à Prague le 19/7/68,” s.n (but probably Kanapa), s.d., dact. APCF, fund “Événements en Tchécoslovaquie,” box 1, folder 5. The version in the PCF archives differs from the version published in 1984 only in some minor details of wording.

- 157 As Rochet put it: “[...] The solution [the improvement of relations with the Soviets] does not only depend on you, but it depends to a large extent on you.” *Kremlin–PCF*, pp. 81–82.
- 158 The letter of 17/7 is in APCF, “Événements en Tchécoslovaquie,” box 2, folder 3. APCF, BP, 18/7/68. The Bureau politique approved this letter. The conference idea was most probably a Rochet–Kanapa initiative. According to Streiff, Guyot was also clearly in favor of the proposal. Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 500.
- 159 APCF, BP, 20/7/68.
- 160 Telegram PCF to PCI, 21/7/68, in APCI, *Ufficio Esteri* (Est), “Francia,” 0552.1205.
- 161 On 21 July Leroy cautiously informed the Czechoslovak ambassador in Paris, Pithart, of the deterioration of PCF–CPSU relations. Bartošek, *Les Aveux*, p. 189. Another element provoking the PCF’s irritation with the Soviets was the fact that Soviet ambassador Zoryn, informed that Leroy rather than Waldeck Rochet personally would come to inform him about the latter’s talks in Prague, reported himself absent. Bartošek, *Les Aveux*, p. 191.
- 162 This was true. The telegram of 18/7/68, CPSU to PCF, can be found in APCF, fund “Événements en Tchécoslovaquie,” box 2, folder 3.
- 163 “Communication urgente via Zorine à Leroy,” 19–20/7, in APCF, “Événements en Tchécoslovaquie,” box 2, folder 3. It is not clear from the PCF archives who in the BP at this point got to see the exchange of telegrams; Rochet returned to Paris from Prague on 20/7. Neither Vigreux nor Streiff mention this series of telegrams. Bartošek mentions that the Czechoslovak ambassador to France, Pithart, was informed of the worsening of PCF–CPSU relations by Leroy. Bartošek, *Les Aveux*, p. 189.
- 164 Although this letter has been published previously (*Kremlin–PCF*, pp. 99–118), I will quote from it here because its frankness was unusual in communist relations: “You ask us to support the letter which you have sent to the Czechoslovak Communist Party [...]. It is impossible for us, to our great regret, to do so. [...] We consider that the letter addressed by the Warsaw meeting to the CPCS is an open interference in the internal affairs of a brother party. As comrade Waldeck Rochet has declared to you, a military intervention in Czechoslovakia would signify a true catastrophe for the international communist movement [...]. Certainly, we regret that we have had to make public our initiative [the pan-European conference] without holding preceding consultations like we usually do. But we have to say quite frankly that after having heard comrade Rochet’s report of his conversations with you and with comrades Suslov and Ponomarev, our Bureau politique has decided that, in the grave situation in which we find ourselves, we have the duty to take the initia-

- tive to propose a meeting of all communist and workers' parties of Europe to try and find a way out of the crisis. [...] It is thus not without profound reflection that we have taken on the issue of the protection of socialism in Czechoslovakia, a position which is different from yours and which, in our view, deserves to be investigated and discussed." Copy of the letter to East German leader Ulbricht, sent 23/7/1968. ZPA-SED, DY/30/IV A 2/20. Some controversy existed concerning this letter in France at the time. Its existence and general content were confirmed in an unsigned statement in the PCF's theoretical journal *Cahiers du Communisme*, Aug–Sept 1968, pp. 16–19. According to Streiff, the letter was drafted by Rochet and at least the following BP members got to see it before publication: Plissonnier, Marchais, Thorez-Vermeersch, Kanapa (and not Guyot). Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 503.
- 165 Bartošek, *Les Aveux*, pp. 190–191. René Andrieu was editor of *Humanité*.
- 166 Discontent between the two parties further aggravated in the context of the preparations for the world communist conference in Budapest throughout the spring of 1968. For Kanapa's report see Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 487. Moreover, a conflict arose between the PCF and the CPCS in late July regarding the diffusion by Radio Prague of information on the correspondence between the French and Soviet communists. Bartošek, *Paris–Prague*, pp. 191–192.
- 167 For the CC resolution see *Humanité*, 29/7/68; see also Bartošek, *Les Aveux*, p. 190.
- 168 Following the decision of the Bureau politique, Rochet's talks in Moscow and Prague were extensively covered by *Humanité*. See especially "Le sens du voyage de Waldeck Rochet à Prague," *Humanité*, 20/7/68. APCF, BP, 18/7/68.
- 169 For example, "La Pravda fait état d'un "plan opérationnel" américain contre les pays socialistes," *Humanité*, 20/7/68, p. 3.
- 170 Also Leroy concluded from conversations with Zoryn in early August that there would be a compromise. Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 506.
- 171 Both titles in *Humanité*, 5/8/68, pp. 1–2.
- 172 For example in *Humanité*, 6/8/68, p. 1, "Déclaration du Parti communiste français."
- 173 APCF, Sec, 9/8/68, pt 2; APCF, BP, 14/8/68, pt. 5.
- 174 APCF, Sec, 9/8/68, pt. 2.
- 175 "Communication annoncée le 14 août et remise le 19 août," s.n., in APCF, fund "Événements en Tchécoslovaquie," box 2, folder 3. The PCI also received such a letter—see below. It is not clear if other communist parties received it.
- 176 "Communication annoncée le 14 août et remise le 19 août," s.n., in APCF, fund "Événements en Tchécoslovaquie," box 2, folder 3.
- 177 For the public analysis of the PCI's position I have consulted the party press, mainly *Unità* and *Rinascita*.
- 178 "Comunicazione al CC del Partito comunista cecoslovacco," *Unità*, 10/1/68, p. 1.
- 179 Franco Bertone was a journalist for *Unità* specialized in Eastern Europe. He was known as a progressive and critical of the Soviet Union.
- 180 Written report by Bertone, APCI, Esteri, Cecoslovacchia, 0552.0285–0289.
- 181 Franco Moranino was a leading figure among the Italian immigrants in Czechoslovakia and generally opposed to reform communism. Bartošek, *Les Aveux*, p. 77.

- 182 In the following months they regularly reported on the Czechoslovak issue, always in a more pessimistic way than other *Unità* correspondents or PCI visitors to Prague. See also Galluzzi's memoirs on the divergences between the reports: Galluzzi, *La svolta*, pp. 192–194.
- 183 Ample extracts from the debates and the conclusions can be found in *Unità*, 27–29/3/68.
- 184 This was a conscious line held by the party leadership. APCI, Dir, 17/7/68, 805.
- 185 “Discorso finale di Luigi Longo,” *Unità*, 29/3/68.
- 186 Bertone, “La corona di Ota Šik,” *Rinascita*, 31/3/68, pp. 29–30.
- 187 Berlinguer, in his personal papers, kept an Italian translation of the *Literarni Lysti* article “Una conferenza normale” by M. Weiner of 14/3/68, mentioned above. The article refers to the Prague Spring as “a model that is forming itself.” In strategic terms, the article refers to “a certain constellation of the South,” with the PCI, Hungary, and “in some respects” Romania. APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 51.2.
- 188 Boffa, “Intervista con Dubček,” *Unità*, 31/3/68, pp. 1, 17. Giuseppe Boffa was the permanent correspondent for *Unità* in Prague in this period. He was a personal friend of Milan Huebl, one of the leading reformist intellectuals, close to Dubček. See also Boffa, “La crisi cecoslovacca,” in Vacca, *Luigi Longo*, pp. 111–117.
- 189 Bertone, “La corona di Ota Šik,” *Rinascita*, 31/3/68, pp. 29–30.
- 190 To gain a picture of the responses to the Prague Spring on the wider Italian Left I have consulted *Avanti!*, the paper of the Socialist Party, and the various press collections in the PCI archives. For the analyses by the radical leftist paper *Il manifesto*, see chapter 7.
- 191 For more detail on communist-socialist relations in 1968, see, for example, Tranfaglia, “Socialisti e comunisti nell'Italia repubblicana,” pp. 499–511; Amato, Cafagna, *Duello a sinistra*, pp. 15–50.
- 192 “La relazione di Pietro Nenni alla conferenza nazionale. La crisi del comunismo,” *Avanti*, 9/4/68, p. 3.
- 193 For example in “Riunito il CC a Praga,” *Avanti*, 30/5/68, p. 3.
- 194 “La relazione di Pietro Nenni alla conferenza nazionale,” *Avanti*, 9/4/68, p. 3.
- 195 See, for example, the speech by Nenni mentioned above; “La Cecoslovacchia accentua il proprio distacco da Mosca,” *Avanti*, 11/4/68, p. 1; “Rinnovate pressioni di Mosca su Praga per condizionare il congresso PCC,” *Avanti*, 8/7/68, p. 1. Also after the elections, which marked the defeat of the PSU, the party continued strongly to criticize the PCI on the issue of Czechoslovakia. Arfé, “Un coraggioso processo di libertà e di autonomia,” *Avanti*, 4/8/68, p. 1.
- 196 “Due documenti del dibattito tra il CPSU e il partito Cecoslovacco,” *Rinascita*, 26/7/68, n. 30.
- 197 APCI, Dir, 29/4/68, 020.0638. Moreover, it was listed in the Direzione documents among the initiatives in the election campaign.
- 198 On Longo's motivations for the trip, see also Mazini, “Luigi Longo” in *Luigi Longo*, pp. 119–127 at 120–121. Mazini was Longo's secretary in this period.
- 199 Oral report Longo, APCI, Dir, 10–11/5/68, 020.0640–0661.
- 200 “Intervista col compagno Longo dopo il suo ritorno di Praga,” in *L'Unità*, 11/5/68.

- 201 Longo, "Rapporto sulla Cecoslovacchia," *Rinascita*, 16/5/68, p. 3.
- 202 Bertone, "Praga: il punto di non ritorno," *Rinascita*, 7/6/68, n.23, pp. 15–16.
- 203 While the PSIUP, in what were its first elections, obtained 4.4 per cent, the PCI reached 26.9 per cent (gaining 1.6 per cent) and the PSU dropped to 14.5 per cent, thus obtaining less than the combined score for the PSDI and the PSI at the previous elections. The DC obtained 39.1 per cent, an increase of 0.8 per cent; it remained the largest party.
- 204 More on the government crisis of this period, in Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia*, pp. 441–448.
- 205 For a few general interpretations of 1968 in Italy see Flores, De Bernardi, *Il sessantotto*, esp. chapters 5 to 7; for a sociological approach see Tarrow, *Democrazia e disordine*; for an interpretative eye-witness account see Rossanda, *L'anno degli studenti*; Rossanda, "Elogio dei gruppettari," in *il manifesto* 1968; the various contributions on Italy in Poggio, *Il sessantotto*; and the various contributions in Agosti, Passerini, Tranfaglia, *La cultura e i luoghi del '68*.
- 206 The most important Maoist groups were Servire il Popolo and the proto-Maoist and Leninist Avanguardia operaia. Other influential non-Maoist groups were the neo-Stalinist Movimento studentesco; Potere operaio, which defined itself as a vanguard group in the orthodox sense, and the libertarian Lotta continua. Flores, De Bernardi, *Il sessantotto*, pp. 178–179.
- 207 Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia*, p. 409.
- 208 For a similar interpretation of the PCI's attitude vis-à-vis the '68 movements, see Flores, Gallerano, *Sul PCI*, pp. 186–190. Ragusa has drawn a somewhat more negative picture of the PCI's attitude vis-à-vis the students, defining it as an "anti-movement" approach as a result of the party's institutionalist perspective. (Ragusa, *I comunisti*, p. 206).
- 209 A similar mix of curiosity and instrumentalisation had already been clear in Longo's article: Longo, "Il movimento studentesco nella lotta anti-capitalistica," *Rinascita*, 3/5/68. Berlinguer and Galluzzi made a trip to Paris in late May 1968. Fiori, *Vita di Enrico Berlinguer*, p. 167.
- 210 Amendola, "Necessità della lotta su due fronti," *Rinascita*, 7/6/68.
- 211 Flores, Gallerano, *Sul PCI*, pp. 189–190.
- 212 However, as Graziani has argued, there were important differences in the culture and conception of socialism between the Ingrao Left in the PCI on the one hand, and the new and far Left influenced by Maoism and Marcuse on the other. Graziani, *Nei punti alti*, pp. 39.
- 213 More detail, for example, in Graziani, *Nei punti alti*, pp. 39–41.
- 214 Conclusions of the CC: "L'agonia del centro-sinistra non deve essere pagata dai lavoratori," *Unità*, 21/6/68, p. 1.
- 215 APCI, UP, 12/6/68, 006.0543.
- 216 There is reference to this letter in the discussion of the extraordinary meeting of the Direzione on 17 July. APCI, Dir, 17/7, 202–0800.
- 217 Oral report Pajetta, APCI, Dir, 17/7, 202–0802. Giancarlo Pajetta was a Direzione member; he had played an important role in the party during the Resistance and at the outcome of the war, and was around 1968 responsible for the press and involved in the important international contacts.

- 218 Kriegel, "The International Role," p. 48.
- 219 Oral report Longo to Direzione, APCI, 29/4/68, 020–0639.
- 220 Also the Cuban, North Vietnamese and North Korean CPs were absent. Timmermann, "Das präkonziliaire Budapester Karussell," p. 3. The Italians succeeded, with the cautious support of the Czechoslovaks, in blocking an SED resolution condemning the Romanian party, which had left the discussions following a dispute with the Syrian CP. "Rencontre consultative des 67 PCs à Budapest, février–mars 1968" in APCF, Fund Fajon, "11: International," folder 2.
- 221 Oral report Berlinguer to Direzione: APCI, Dir, 15/3/68, 020–0579.
- 222 The PCI, which since 1967 had opposed this, managed only to obtain that no party could be forced to sign a final document. The party lost, however, on other issues which it considered crucial: the conference would not be open to non-communist journalists (although individual parties were allowed to hold press conferences at any given time), and a commission for the drafting of the texts would include only 12 parties. Timmermann, "Das präkonziliaire Budapester Karussell," pp. 9–10.
- 223 Berlinguer's speech: "Discorso Berlinguer" (various versions), s.d., in APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 48. See also the report of the meeting in "Rencontre consultative des 67 PCs à Budapest février–mars 1968," in APCF, Fund Fajon, "11: International," folder 2.
- 224 Oral report Berlinguer to the Direzione, APCI, Dir, 15/3/68, 020–0597. Another incident occurred at the late April meeting: when the Italians vividly expressed their fears that the texts drafted by the Hungarians would serve as final documents, Kliszko walked out of the session. Oral report Galluzzi to the Direzione, APCI, Dir, 29/4/68, 020–0639.
- 225 "Oggetto: Riunione del gruppo di lavoro a Budapest per la preparazione dello schema di documento per la conferenza di Mosca," Luciano Gruppi, Roma, 24/6/68, all'Ufficio di Segreteria, Sezione Esteri; in APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 53.1.
- 226 This was closely connected to the Budapest preparations, as at least one of the versions read that the world communist conference, once in place, would take on a permanent structure.
- 227 Longo proposed that he would take a "personal" initiative, an idea that was not supported by Berlinguer and Amendola. APCI, Dir, 19/7, 002–822.
- 228 Written report by Longo of 26/7 meeting Longo–Kirilenko, in APCI, Esteri, URSS, 0553–0218. The Soviets attempted to pressure the PCI towards a condemnation of the 2000 Words, which the latter refused. Written report by Longo of the 9/7 meeting (both delegations), in APCI, Esteri, URSS, 0553–0327, pp. 10–12.
- 229 APCI, Esteri, URSS, 0553–0327, pp. 8–9.
- 230 After the Warsaw letter, the Ufficio politico urgently met and decided that the bilateral PCI–CPSU meeting in Moscow, which had been planned for 18 July, should definitely take place and that the Czechoslovak question should be discussed at this meeting. Oral report G.C. Pajetta of the meeting to the Direzione: APCI, Dir, 17/7, 020–0798 to 0801. See also APCI, UP, 9/7, 1345.
- 231 Despite the Soviets' attempts to hinder any form of contact between the French and Italian delegations in Moscow, Rochet and Pajetta succeeded in talking to

- each other shortly before departure. Oral report Pajetta, APCI, Dir, 17/7, 020–0800. See also Pajetta’s memoirs: Pajetta, *Le crisi*, p. 125–127.
- 232 Oral report Pajetta, APCI, Dir, 17/7, 020–0800.
- 233 See Galluzzi’s account in his memoirs: Galluzzi, *La svolta*, pp. 196–197.
- 234 “Mille parole in risposta alle “Duemil  ,” *Rinascita*, 19/7/68, pp. 15–16.
- 235 Pajetta, *Le crisi*, p. 123.
- 236 Oral report G.C. Pajetta to the Direzione: APCI, Dir, 17/7, 020–0801.
- 237 APCI, Dir, 17/7, 020–0802.
- 238 APCI, Dir, 17/7, 020–0809.
- 239 APCI, Dir, 17/7, 020–0806–0810.
- 240 APCI, Dir, 17/7, 020–0813. Achille Occhetto, future general secretary, was in 1968 leader of the youth organization and was one of the younger Direzione members, generally in favor of innovation.
- 241 Berlinguer spoke of “20 years of bad governance,” for which he was attacked by Colombi and Terracini. APCI, Dir, 17/7, 020–0808. Umberto Terracini, co-founder of *Ordine nuovo*, had been one of the central leaders of the party since its existence. He had persistently argued in favor of innovation of the party, especially in 1956.
- 242 Published in (PCI, ed.) *Il partito comunista italiano*, pp. 304–306.
- 243 Colombi understood that this statement directly led to the condemnation of an invasion, a point which earlier Berlinguer and Lama had also made explicit. APCI, Dir, 17/7, 020–0820.
- 244 APCI, Dir, 17/7, 020–0816. A few days later the PCI changed its position on the French conference proposal. See also Galluzzi, *La svolta*, p. 199.
- 245 APCI, Dir, 17/7, 020–0812.
- 246 “In this sense, we can recognize that there is an imperialist anti-socialist maneuver going on,” he added. APCI, Dir, 17/7, 020–0814.
- 247 APCI, Dir, 17/7, 020–0815.
- 248 APCI, Dir, 26/7, 020–0881. It is not clear whether this trip eventually took place. See also Hoebel, “Il PCI, il ’68 cecoslovacca,” pp. 1152–1153.
- 249 APCI, UP, 30/7/68, 1349.
- 250 The PCI received the invitation for the congress planned for 9 September, on 11 July; it decided to send three Direzione members. APCI, Esteri, Cecoslovacchia, 0552–0323. The fact that the CPSC wished to regard the PCI as a special ally was also suggested by a separate letter which it sent to Longo, explaining its reactions to the Warsaw letter. “Messaggio urgente al compagno Longo della Segreteria del Partito comunista cecoslovacco,” 13/7/68, in APCI, Esteri, Cecoslovacchia, 0552–0326. Furthermore, there were several letters of thanks sent from Czechoslovakia to the PCI. APCI, Esteri, Cecoslovacchia, 0552–0336.
- 251 This interview was to take place on 21 August. APCI, Esteri, Cecoslovacchia, 0552–0346.

CHAPTER 5.

Invasion, Dissent, Crisis

*“The current strategy of détente
is objectively obstructing us”*
E. Macaluso, September 1968¹

The invasion of Czechoslovakia affected the internationalism of the PCI and PCF as an issue of deepest identity, because it involved all three dimensions of internationalism: the organization of the world communist movement (in particular questions relating to communist party autonomy and communist state sovereignty), its doctrine (the question of “orthodox” socialism), and European strategy (the question of détente). In both the PCI and PCF cases, however, the openly expressed dissent over the invasion was followed immediately by the basic choice not to question Soviet-aligned internationalism itself.

Nonetheless, the internationalism of the PCI and the PCF was transformed through the invasion of Czechoslovakia. A line can be drawn from the short-term reconstruction of party identity following the total disarray in which these parties found themselves immediately following the invasion, to the mid- and long-term transformation of the internationalism of these parties as a result of the Czechoslovak crisis. The immediate responses of the two parties mattered in two ways: first, by assessing that a total break with Soviet-aligned internationalism was inconceivable; and second, by setting out the parameters which were to direct post-1968 Soviet-aligned internationalism. In the case of the PCI, the immediate reaction to place the question of détente at the centre of attention in the post-invasion discussions was highly important; in the case of the PCF, the emphasis on (state) sovereignty bore great significance. Such shifts resulted from the changes which these parties’ internationalism had undergone since 1956, and the realm—and limits—of possible further change that had been created.

Chronologically, this chapter covers the period from the invasion up to November–December 1968. After briefly introducing the developments in Czechoslovakia, I reconstruct the genesis of the decision to protest against the invasion, the public arguments invoked in this decision, the internal debates and the deeper-lying motives. I furthermore concentrate on the

immediate consequences of the invasion and the dissent in terms of internal and domestic politics: the crisis inside the PCI and PCF and the temporary embittering of relations with other domestic political forces. These developments should be understood in close interaction with the crisis in the world communist movement following August 1968, and specifically the acute worsening of relations between the dissenting parties and the major actors in the world communist movement. This analysis is pursued in chapter 6.

1. THE INVASION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

1.1. *The military invasion and the political impasse*

The Politburo of the CPSU took the final decision to invade Czechoslovakia on 17 August; it communicated this decision to the communist party leaders of East Germany, Bulgaria, Poland and Hungary on the following day.² While “Operation Danube” was clearly a Soviet-led invasion operating under the High Command of the Red Army, it was very important to the Soviet leadership to give it the appearance of a joint Warsaw Treaty Organization operation. On 21 August the invading troops took control of key military and political sites as well as the transportation and communication networks. Eighty-two Czechoslovak citizens were killed and over 3,000 wounded.³ The CPCS and the government urged the Czechoslovak Army and the People’s Militia not to react in any way, and the invading troops encountered no armed resistance.⁴ The leading CPCS reformers, Dubček, Smrkovský, Kriegel, Černík and Josef Špaček, were arrested and forcefully transported to Poland, where they were held prisoner for over a week.⁵

As anticipated by the invading powers, the governments of the USA and the West European powers abstained from politically meaningful reactions. At a meeting of the US National Security Council it was affirmed that “we are in a more delicate situation than at the time of Hungary because of the developing relations with the USSR.”⁶ There was a consensus in the US government not to take any military, political or economic action, for fear of possible Soviet reactions such as another blockade of West Berlin. While NATO did not react at all, the governments of West Germany, France and Italy protested formally, but left it at that.⁷ Strong protests, however, came from out-of-government communist parties around the world, as well as from communist countries such as China, Yugoslavia and Romania.⁸ The latter two claimed to fear a Soviet invasion. While Yugoslavia sought secu-

rity guarantees from the international community, in Romania the army and the people were put on alert.⁹ Faced with these worldwide protests from members of the communist movement, the Soviet leadership, to justify the invasion, stressed the infiltration by “over 20,000 armed imperialist agents” from West Germany in the Czechoslovak party, state and military apparatuses. Besides this, on 22 August *Pravda* published an unsigned “appeal for fraternal assistance,” supposedly written by the Czechoslovak Communist Party.¹⁰ This document was the focus of controversy in Czechoslovakia and the world communist movement during the weeks following the invasion.

The primary goal of the invasion was political change and the installation of a Soviet-friendly government.¹¹ However, while the invasion as a military operation was highly successful, it failed in terms of its political agenda. The invaders had expected that, following the invasion, an anti-reformist majority in the CPCS Presidium would take over political power through the establishment of a “revolutionary government of workers and peasants.”¹² Discussions in view of the formation of a collaborationist government were indeed held in the two days following the invasion, involving, among others, Indra, Kolder and Bilák. In the presence of Soviet officials, a meeting of the pro-Soviet elements in the CC took place in the Praha Hotel in Prague.¹³ At the same time, however, it became clear throughout the weeks following the invasion that Dubček and other reformers such as Svoboda, Smrkovský and Kriegl enjoyed widespread support in the party and state apparatus, and even more so among the public.

The weakness of the anti-Dubček forces within the CPCS first became evident from a statement condemning the invasion issued by the CPCS Presidium. Of eleven members, only four voted against the statement. The statement invoked “principles governing relations between socialist states” to condemn the invasion. It also called upon the population to remain calm.¹⁴ Moreover, in what was primarily a national reaction, public opinion widely, forcefully but peacefully voiced protest against the invasion and gave expression to its continued support for Dubček and the reform leaders. There were peaceful demonstrations all over the country as well as campaigns to disorient and demoralize the invading troops. A network of clandestine radio transmitters and newspapers gave expression to Czechoslovak people’s anger.¹⁵ The most flagrant illustration of the political failure connected to the invasion was the 14th CPCS National Party Congress, held secretly on 22 August in a factory in Vysočany near Prague.¹⁶ The Congress, attended by about 1,200 party members, gave proof of the major-

ity support for Dubček and the reformers. The documents adopted included an assertion that the invading troops had not been invited by the CPCS, a statement on the denial of a counter-revolutionary situation, a demand for the withdrawal of the troops, a call for a general strike, an appeal to the population to “ignore the troops,” and a message of support to the “legitimate leaders” Dubček, Černík, Smrkovský and Svoboda. Moreover, the new Central Committee that was elected demonstrated a significant political shift: it included 119 new members with a progressive profile, and not more than 25 re-elected members.¹⁷

1.2. *The Moscow Protocol and the Brezhnev Doctrine*

The Moscow Protocol, signed by representatives of the Soviet and Czechoslovak communist parties in Moscow on 26 August, was not an agreement but a *Diktat* imposed on Dubček and the other Czechoslovak leaders held in Moscow.¹⁸ It was the immediate consequence of the failure of the political aim of the invasion, and of the fact that it had become unavoidable for the Soviets to continue to deal with Dubček and the moderate reformers.¹⁹ The East German, Polish and Bulgarian communist leaders, as well as some in the Soviet Politburo, proposed to install a temporary military dictatorship which would carry out massive repression. Brezhnev preferred to avoid further repression but did consider imposing military rule in Czechoslovakia as a final option should the Moscow Protocol not be signed or implemented by the Czechoslovak leaders. The protocol was a political program for systematically undoing the Prague Spring, including the re-establishment of the “leading role” of the communist party and its full control over the press, and the cancellation of the Vysocny Congress. The document further sanctioned the troop presence, but it was affirmed that they would not interfere in the political situation.²⁰

The theory of limited sovereignty, or the “Brezhnev Doctrine” as it came to be called in the West, was a theory of communist internationalism formulated by Brezhnev and other Soviet officials in the months following the invasion. Important texts in this context are an article by S. Kovalev published in *Pravda* on 29 September, and a speech by Brezhnev before the Polish Communist Party Congress in November 1968. The Brezhnev Doctrine affirmed that, because the fate of all socialist states was intimately linked, socialist states had not only the right but the duty to interfere in the affairs of other socialist states when they considered the socialist nature of the regime to be at stake.²¹ This implied a specific notion of sovereignty

which was “class-based”: sovereignty was held by the working classes worldwide and by the communist parties representing them. As the Kovalev article put it:

*It is impossible to overlook the allegations that are being made in certain quarters, that the action of five socialist countries violates the Marxist-Leninist principle of sovereignty and the right of nations to self-determination. Such claims are untenable insofar as they are based on an abstract, non-class approach. [...] The sovereignty of individual socialist countries cannot be set against the interests of world socialism and the world revolutionary movement. [...] The weakening of any of the links in the world system of socialism directly affects all the socialist countries, and they cannot look indifferently upon this.*²²

The argument was taken further: it was in the very name of sovereignty that a military and political intervention in Czechoslovakia had been necessary, as the country’s sovereignty had been threatened by “imperialist agents” and Western infiltrants. The category of sovereignty as such was not discarded. It was hailed as a principle, but defined in such a way that it could be used to *justify* the invasion:

The assistance provided to workers in the CSSR by the other socialist countries, which jeopardized the export of counter-revolution from outside, was in fact a struggle to uphold the sovereignty of the CSSR against those forces that deprive it of this sovereignty. [...] In a class-based society there is no such thing as class-less legality and there never will be. Laws and legal norms are always subordinate to the laws of the class struggle and the laws of socialist development.

This implied a total cancellation of the distinction between domestic and foreign policy, and the most rigid view on the principles for domestic developments in socialist countries. In Kovalev’s terms:

Without question, the peoples of the socialist countries and the communist parties have and must have freedom to determine their country’s path of development. Any decision they make, however, must not be harmful either to socialism in their own country or to the fundamental interests of other socialist countries. Whoever forgets this in giving

exclusive emphasis to the autonomy and independence of communist parties is guilty of a one-sided approach and of shirking their internationalist duties. [...]

In fact, "limited sovereignty," as the implicit but governing practice inside the Soviet-dominated communist world, had always existed. The Brezhnev Doctrine reformulated an understanding and a practice which had been applied in a self-evident way and without a need for justification under Stalin and Khrushchev. In the Comintern and Cominform eras, interference by the CPSU in the internal affairs of other communist parties and states had been the rule. What was new, however, was the *need* felt by the Soviet leaders to justify the invasion of Czechoslovakia theoretically. What was also new with respect to 1956 was a certain embarrassment that was felt through this justification. This became clear in particular when Brezhnev denied that there was such a thing as a theory of limited sovereignty, as he did at the World Communist Conference in June 1969.²³ The fact that Moscow felt the need to provide a theoretical justification was born out of a combination of three factors: the political failure that accompanied the military invasion and the obvious and large-scale disagreement with it in Czechoslovakia; the fact that the Prague Spring reform and revival movement had been headed by people calling themselves communists; and the protests against the invasion by communists worldwide. This last point is underscored by the fact that the various formulations of the doctrine all pointed at these "false" and "mistaken" protests against the invasion.

To be sure, the notion of sovereignty was not unknown in Soviet legal theory traditions. Under Lenin, the Bolsheviks had considered themselves as the defenders of people's sovereignty and of the right to self-determination of the peoples.²⁴ But in this context, the class character of sovereignty had never been counterposed to its national character in such a sharp way as was the case in the Brezhnev Doctrine. In addition, sovereignty had never referred to relations among socialist states, which strictly speaking were not considered as foreign relations. Rather, the principle had always been invoked in the context of the "defense of socialism" against imperialism (or fascism during the Second World War), and as such regarded relations between socialist and capitalist states. It was in this sense also that Khrushchev had used sovereignty at the time of the 20th CPSU Congress and in relation to peaceful coexistence: respect for national sovereignty *between* the blocs as a basis for peaceful coexistence between them.

Finally, the “theory of silent counter-revolution” was developed as a necessary correlate to the Brezhnev Doctrine and in response to the explicit questioning by communists worldwide of Soviet statements regarding the infiltration of Western agents in the Czechoslovak party and military apparatus. Soviet theorists now promoted the idea that imperialist forces had developed more cunning, covert and careful strategies in their attempts to overthrow the socialist regimes. The situation in Czechoslovakia, it was argued, might not have appeared as an open counter-revolution at first sight, but this was precisely what the Western counter-revolutionary forces wanted communists to believe.²⁵

2. THE AFTERMATH AND THE “NORMALIZATION”

2.1. *The meaning of “normalization”*

The political process that took place in Czechoslovakia following the invasion, up to 1969, was defined by the invading forces and by the anti-reformists in Czechoslovakia as a process of “normalization.”²⁶ The use of the term itself was a powerful tool, which summarized the entire propaganda effort to portray the Prague Spring as an “abnormal” situation for a loyal and orthodox socialist regime. “Normalization” in Soviet communist tradition always referred to realignment to the Soviet Union and to the re-installing of the power monopoly of the communist party. The term “normalization” and its logic were introduced by the invaders but increasingly taken over in Czechoslovakia, first only by pro-Soviet conservatives but increasingly by a wide range of people who, for different reasons, wished to forget about the 1968 events and were willing to accommodate to the situation of occupation and limited sovereignty.²⁷ Like the Brezhnev Doctrine, the need for a politics of normalization from the Soviet perspective was a consequence of the initial inability to install a puppet regime. Instead, a much more complex and un-transparent political situation came about in which it was, in the first instance, the Prague Spring leaders, under severe pressure, who partially brought the country to internal and external realignment with Soviet orthodoxy.

Over the time-span of a year the core group of reformist communist leaders—moderates and radicals—fell apart and their basis of support in public opinion crumbled. This happened as a result of three factors: firstly,

active Soviet pressure and intervention, among politicians as well as in public opinion; secondly, the emigration of a large number of advocates of reform;²⁸ and thirdly, the increasing divisions among the party leadership regarding the way in which to deal with the situation. While there was a general acknowledgement that rejection of the military occupation and of the Moscow Protocol was not an option, disagreement existed over the question of how far to accommodate to the situation. Simultaneously with the process of the disintegration of the reformers' initial power basis, a group of communist leaders known as moderate reformists managed to construct a centrist or "realist" line. This group, led by Husák, thus succeeded in presenting itself as the only realistic solution. Adding to the ambiguity surrounding terms such as "realist," "conservative" and "progressive," was the fact that expressions of allegiance to the Prague Spring program and lip service to Dubček were widespread, even among the more enthusiastic executors of the "normalization." From early 1969 onwards, however, a situation emerged in which the leadership as well as the contents of the Prague Spring were increasingly discredited.²⁹

The first concrete step in the process of normalization was the construction of a consensual interpretation among the CPCS leadership and the public regarding the stormy events of the past half year. Firstly, regarding the Prague Spring, it needed to be acknowledged that the reform movement carried out by the CPCS had been only partly a positive development. The Prague Spring reformers, the new narrative went, had rightly attempted to respond to the need for reform of a regime in political crisis, but they were partly corrupted by adversaries of socialism who had sought to re-install capitalism. The CPCS at times failed to respond to this and overlooked the international consequences of these events. Secondly, a "normal" situation meant that the CPCS was restored to full power, which included, first and foremost, the complete restoration of censorship. A third element of the consensus was the acknowledgement that there was no other solution than to accept the temporary presence of the foreign troops and the terms of the Moscow Protocol. Politicians and the public were told that these conditions needed to be accepted for the sake of patriotism, national unity and political stability.

2.2. Normalization under Dubček

While Dubček and some of the reform-minded leaders remained in power until April 1969, Moscow at all times closely supervised the political

situation. Immediately following the invasion, a number of Dubček's most radical reformist collaborators and advisors were ousted under direct Soviet pressure. These included Kriegel, Císař, Mlynář, Šik, and the director of Czechoslovak television Jiří Pelikán.³⁰ Although the pro-Soviet conspirators were removed from the higher CPCS ranks, the position of the opponents of the Prague Spring was generally reinforced by the post-invasion situation. Not only did the Moscow Protocol explicitly protect them against legal or political sanctions, new alliances were shaped between old pro-Moscovites and new, pragmatic ones. As a new anti-reformist mood swung through the CPCS, a group of "ultras" (ultra-conservatives) became more outspoken in their opposition to reform.³¹ After the invasion the Presidium was expanded to include a large number of representatives of social and interest groups (women, peasants, workers, Slovaks...), co-opted from the Vysocany Congress. However, in the eyes of the core leaders (Dubček, Černík, Husák, Svoboda, Smrkovský), the Presidium had become unworkable. From September on, these leaders started to take the major decisions privately.³² Out of fear of aggravating and publicizing the disagreements among themselves, the core leadership imposed upon itself a regime of strict censorship and control of information.³³ Similarly, for the sake of political stability, the worsening disagreements inside the CPCS leadership were concealed from the public. It was repeated that the suspension of basic rights of freedom of speech and political mobilization, which had been so typical of the Prague Spring *revival*, was merely temporary and would come to an end once the foreign troops had retreated.³⁴

The issue of the continued troop presence became the core matter of tension with the Soviets as well as among the Czechoslovak leaders themselves. While, according to the Soviets, the situation needed first to be "normalized" before troops could retreat entirely, Dubček and the remaining reformists argued that the retreat of the troops was a preliminary condition for a return to normality. Soviet military troops, however, remained stationed in Czechoslovakia and a legal basis for this was provided by a bilateral treaty on "The Temporary Presence of Soviet Forces on Czechoslovak Territory," signed on 16 October. Contrary to its name, the treaty allowed for a permanent presence of Soviet troops. Between 80,000 and 100,000 Soviet soldiers were stationed in Czechoslovakia for 23 years.³⁵ It was in this context that the larger part of the Prague Spring reform program and the entire revival process were reversed. Firstly, censorship and party control over the press were reinstalled. In late August an "Office for the Press

and Information” was installed, which had to implement the various control measures that included guidelines on the choice of topics and the preliminary submission of editorials. Furthermore, reform of the communist party was halted and its power monopoly was reinstalled. The political clubs K231 and KAN, as well as the Social Democratic Party, were banned in late August and a new National Front law impeded the future organization of such groupings.³⁶

At the same time, the CPCS leadership did manage to salvage part of the reform program, in particular the federalization of the Czechoslovak state. Autonomous Czech and Slovak institutions were now granted powers regarding the economy, censorship, welfare and transport, and a bicameral Czech-Slovak parliament was installed. The Soviets complied on the issue of federalism, because, as Kusin has argued, it was expected to divert attention away from more potentially explosive issues such as freedom of speech and pluralism.³⁷ Another Prague Spring agenda point that was carried out was the rehabilitation of a number of victims of the trials of the 1950s. Furthermore, the functioning of the existing factory councils was resumed. Radical reformists put their hopes on the system of factory councils as a potential instrument for radical mobilization and enduring opposition. It turned out, however, that the factory councils were stripped of any radical potential and their importance did not go beyond the internal management and organization of the factories.³⁸

2.3. Husák's rise and Dubček's fall

Husák and the “realists” were able to rise to power in the conditions shaped by the military occupation—limited national sovereignty and limited intellectual freedom. Some of Dubček’s closest former collaborators, moderate reformists such as Černík and Svoboda, increasingly distanced themselves from him and joined this “realist” line.³⁹ Through the first half of 1968, G. Husák had started to be known as a reformer. A Slovak, he had been particularly interested in the national question. In September 1968, he became a Presidium member and first secretary of the Slovak Communist Party, replacing Kolder who was now discredited.⁴⁰ Parallel to the rise of the “realist” group, the alternative and pro-reform centre of power which had been created by the Vysocany Congress was eliminated.⁴¹ The Soviets, furthermore, actively worked towards Dubček’s loss of credibility. Brezhnev pressured for concrete personnel changes in the Central Committee

and for an official renouncing of the April program along with self-criticism by the January leadership; Dubček refused both.⁴²

Major popular protestations occurred in October and November 1968 and they further undermined the position as well as the unity of the leadership in office. Part of the CPCS leadership seized the opportunity to call for stricter forms of censorship and repression.⁴³ Students, supported by intellectuals and public figures, went on strike in late November and issued a ten-point manifesto which asked for the enactment of the Action Program.⁴⁴ Although public opinion polls demonstrated that Dubček and the remaining reformers continued to enjoy wide public confidence,⁴⁵ the party leadership was increasingly immobilized, divided and vulnerable in the face of Soviet interference. Dubček, Černík and Husák were called to Moscow in the greatest secrecy, and Brezhnev demanded and obtained a series of corrections to the Central Committee texts that were being drafted for the upcoming meeting.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the Soviets, aided by Husák, managed to oust Smrkovský—the first case in what was to become a process of elimination of the most progressive reformers.⁴⁷

Adding to the chaos in the party leadership was the self-immolation of student Jan Palach in January 1969, committed in the name of freedom and political liberalization. The country was in shock, the army was kept on alert, another Soviet intervention was feared and clashes between students and police ended in almost 200 arrests. Paralyzed, the party leadership could do nothing other than call for calm, which further alienated it from critical public opinion.⁴⁸ The incidents surrounding the Czechoslovak–Soviet hockey match in late March were the awaited occasion for direct Soviet interference. When, on 28 March, the Czechoslovak hockey team beat the Soviet team in the world championships in Stockholm, mass demonstrations occurred in all major Czechoslovak cities. Nine Soviet garrisons were attacked and the main Aeroflot office in Prague was demolished. These violent incidents were instigated by Soviet agents. Soviet defense minister Grechko was sent to Czechoslovakia (without Dubček being notified) to announce that troops would enter Czechoslovakia as soon as more trouble arose.⁴⁹ Svoboda promised the Soviets that Dubček would be replaced by Husák at the next plenum, planned for April, and Husák and Strougal managed to turn the Presidium against Dubček. Finally, in the face of all this pressure, Dubček resigned as head of the party in early April, and appointed Husák as his replacement.⁵⁰

Husák carried out the “normalization” in a systematic though gradual way. The statement of protest against the invasion which had been issued by the Presidium on 22 August 1968 was cancelled by Husák exactly one year later. Press censorship was restored completely, and the reform of the party was undone. Individual liberties were cut again as they had been before 1968, and the system of coercion tightened. Dubček was expelled from the CPCS in June 1970, following a mock procedure. However, probably fearing massive popular protest, the regime decided to spare the most well-known reformers but to set up trials to convict second-rank reformists.⁵¹ It took until the 14th Congress of May 1971 for the Central Committee to be entirely purged of former reformers. The purge in the wider party organization, which only started in 1970, was one of the most drastic ones in the history of European communism. Close to half a million members were expelled from the party organization—that is, about 30 per cent of the membership in January 1968.⁵²

On a symbolic level there were systematic attempts to force the former reformers to public self-criticism regarding the Prague Spring. This was supposed to take place at the Central Committee plenum of September 1969, but the reformers, among them Dubček and Smrkovský, refused to do so.⁵³ This was the point at which the creation of a national consensus on the memory of the Prague Spring, as the normalizers had intended it, failed. The normalizers also failed to construct a consensus with respect to the invasion. Dubček, and those who remained loyal to him, never endorsed the view that the invasion had been necessary or that it had been an act of “brotherly help.” Despite the repression, resistance and dissidence against the normalized regime continued throughout 1969 and after. On the first anniversary of the invasion, masses of people, mainly workers and students, came out onto the streets in spontaneous demonstrations in all Czechoslovak towns. Dissident activity, which denounced the repression and adhered to the various strands of the Prague Spring ideas, continued up to late 1969; by then, the most influential groups had been eliminated.⁵⁴ Throughout 1969 and 1970, organized opposition activity grew into a “quasi party” of reformists, including Prague Spring party officials and intellectuals as well as new opponents of the regime.⁵⁵

3. THE DISSENT

Most of the West European communist parties openly disagreed with the invasion. This was made possible by the changes that had occurred in the world communist movement since 1956—on the one hand the disunity and multiple cleavages, and on the other hand the convergence and the intensification of contacts among the West European communist parties and Romania and Yugoslavia, which decreased the fear of isolation. During the days following the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the great majority of the West European communist parties expressed their disagreement with it. Those who supported it were either parties operating in illegality, or very small parties highly dependent on the world communist movement. These were the Communist Party of Greece in exile (KKE), the Communist Party of Cyprus,⁵⁶ the Communist Party of Portugal, whose leadership resided in Moscow, the Communist Party of Luxemburg (strongly influenced by the East German SED), and the communist parties of West Germany and West Berlin (highly dependent on the SED). Alongside the communist parties of Italy and France, those of Spain, Finland, Great Britain, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland and Denmark also protested against the invasion. The Spanish Communist Party (CPE), led by S. Carrillo, went furthest in its critique of the Soviet Union, denouncing Moscow's "bureaucratic centralism" and distancing itself from the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Also, the Austrian Communist Party (KPÖ), led by F. Muhri, voiced fundamental criticism of the socialist regimes. It was the start of a profound crisis in this party, which struggled with internal disagreement and was put under intense pressure from Moscow.⁵⁷

In the world communist movement more generally, the invasion caused a profound shock. Disunity was more evident and criticism of the Soviet Union more widespread than it had ever been before. Romania, Yugoslavia, China and Albania condemned the invasion. North Vietnam and most of the communist parties of Africa and Latin America, including Cuba, supported it, although the latter country rather for reasons of global strategy than because of the value of the Prague Spring. Furthermore, the invasion provoked a crisis in the non-military organizations linked to the world communist movement, such as the World Peace Council, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, the World Student Union and the World Trade

Union Confederation (the latter two of which had their headquarters in Prague). While the Trade Union Confederation condemned the invasion, open divisions came to the surface in the other three organizations.⁵⁸

3.1. *The PCI*

3.1.1. *The agreement to disagree*

On the night of the invasion, 20–21 August, a group of core leaders who were in Rome met at the *Unità* headquarters. Among them were Ingrao, G. Napolitano, U. Terracini, M. Scoccimarro, A. Cossutta and M. Ferrara.⁵⁹ Longo, Amendola, Berlinguer and G.C. Pajetta had not yet returned from the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe where they were staying on private holidays. There was a consensus among those present that the PCI needed to condemn the invasion. There was also agreement on the need to react immediately, without waiting for reactions from other parties in Italy or communist parties in the world.⁶⁰ The draft text of an Ufficio politico communication was written by Napolitano and Ingrao—two representatives of different currents—and approved by Longo via telephone from Moscow.⁶¹ Longo's position in the days following the invasion was determining in two ways. At his meeting in Moscow with Suslov and Ponomarev on the morning of the invasion, he made it very clear that the PCI could not approve of the invasion. Furthermore, when the Soviets showed him a version of the "Appeal for Fraternal Assistance," allegedly from the CPCS, he immediately decided to disregard it.⁶² The UP statement, issued on the morning of 21 August, expressed its incomprehension and its "grave dissent" at the decision for "military intervention."⁶³ It reaffirmed its solidarity with the "process of renewal led by the Czechoslovak Communist Party."

After a dramatic meeting on 23 August, the Direzione issued a statement which repeated the UP's dissent and in some aspects radicalized it. The statement was approved by all members, including Colombi, who had in July opposed the party's criticism of the Soviet Union. Repeating its "grave dissent" and "reprobation," the statement also endorsed the CPCS's request for the withdrawal of the troops and demanded that the independence of the Czechoslovak state and communist party be fully restored. During the Direzione debate, Longo opposed an explicit request for the withdrawal of the troops; Galluzzi, Terracini and, decisively, Berlinguer were in favor.⁶⁴ On the other hand, the Direzione statement, in contrast to the UP statement, dwelt at length on the "anti-Soviet campaign" that it perceived in Italy and denounced "false sympathy" with Czechoslovakia from the parties of

the centre and the Right. It denounced the attempts to “obscure the historical merits of the Soviet Union” and argued against the reinforcement of Cold War attitudes in Italy. The mechanisms of identity—closing of the ranks, sharply distinguishing between communists and non-communists—preceded the actual attacks on the party by non-communist groups.⁶⁵

Of crucial importance was the PCI’s automatic rejection of the core elements of the Soviet justification for the invasion: the “Appeal for Assistance” and the “infiltration by imperialist agents.” However, the party leadership abstained from making this very clear in its official position: the PCI press and statements did not mention the arguments invoked by the Soviets, either in a positive or negative way.⁶⁶ A few individual leaders, however, went a step further: Ferrara, in a *Unità* article, explicitly stated that the intervention had not been requested and that a counter-revolutionary danger was very unlikely, as the Soviets never specified it.⁶⁷ More generally, the PCI press relied upon information coming from the West and from Czechoslovakia (official as well as clandestine), rather than from the invading states.⁶⁸ Also internally there was a consensus on the non-validity of the Soviet argumentation, with, partly, the exception of Colombi.⁶⁹ Terracini expressed the clearest view on Soviet motives: “they [the Soviets] wanted to have executors for their decisions [in Czechoslovakia].”⁷⁰

3.1.2. *Arguments and motives: the centrality of détente*

The public statements by the UP, the Direzione and the Central Committee of 27–29 August invoked the following arguments:⁷¹

1. negotiation and debate as modes of interaction between communist parties rather than enforcement and interference, referring to Čierna and Bratislava (in all three statements)
2. the autonomy of communist parties (in all statements)
3. state independence (in all statements)
4. solidarity with the new course in Czechoslovakia led by the CPCS (in all statements)
5. diverse roads to socialism (only in the Direzione statement)
6. the need for the renewal of socialism, initiated by the 20th Congress of the CPSU (only in the CC statement)
7. the unity of the workers’ and communist movement on a global level (in all statements); a “new conception of unity” (only in the Direzione statement)

8. the unity of all forces of the Left in Italy and Western Europe (only in the Direzione statement)
9. the unity of anti-capitalist and revolutionary forces, understood as being wider than the frontiers of the socialist states (only in the CC statement)
10. the struggle against imperialism and for peace (only in the Direzione and the CC statements)
11. to overcome the blocs, to liberate Italy from Atlanticism and to create a system of collective security in Europe (only in the CC statement).

The first three points followed up on what I have called the formalistic defense of the Prague Spring. While the fourth point referred to substance-related support of the Prague Spring, the following two points were a radicalization of this and touched on the very conception of socialism. Arguments seven, eight and nine announced an important evolution of the PCI's conception of internationalism and of allegiance on the international level. This corresponded to a radicalization of the earlier notion of *allargamento*: the world communist movement, in the PCI's conception, came to include, besides communist parties, other groupings of the Left and anti-imperialist groups. Arguments ten and eleven were to do with the crucial question of d  tente and followed up on the strategic defense of the Prague Spring as a movement announcing the upsetting of the bipolar order in Europe.

The invasion was such a shock to the PCI and its leaders because it demonstrated the wide gap between their own conception of internationalism and actual Soviet policies in three ways. Firstly, it revealed how deep the gap was regarding doctrine and conceptions of socialism between the PCI on the one hand, and the Soviet and other "orthodox" parties on the other. While to the PCI leadership the Prague Spring had been a largely positive development and certainly a socialist one, it was clear that it was not so for the most powerful actors in the world communist movement. Secondly, it revealed the very different notions of autonomy and just relations between communist parties and states. Thirdly, and most importantly, the invasion revealed a fundamental misunderstanding between the PCI and the CPSU regarding d  tente. This was highly problematic to the PCI, because, since 1956, the party had considered its domestic strategy to be fully dependent on the Soviet strategy of peaceful coexistence and d  tente

in Europe. As discussed, *détente*, understood as the loosening of *internal* bloc cohesion, was of central importance as an international framework supporting its domestic strategy, given Italy's Cold War situation as being highly dependent on the US. To the PCI, "overcoming the blocs" implied changing relations not only between East and West but inside both blocs. This implied, in the East, a less hegemonic role for the Soviet Union and new forms of collaboration between communist parties and states, which would make the democratization and the diversification of the socialist regimes possible. In Western Europe it meant ending American supremacy as the necessary condition for the free development of these countries towards socialism.

The invasion now demonstrated, on the one hand, that the Soviet conception of *détente* did not involve changes taking place inside the communist bloc and in the relations between its members. On the other hand, the invasion demonstrated that, to the Soviet Union, the issue of changes within the capitalist system was a low priority, as it had not taken into account the damage which the invasion would inflict upon the domestic position of communist parties in the West and the image of socialism there. The question of Soviet strategy was so upsetting, firstly, because it raised the question of how far the loosening of hierarchical relations in the communist bloc was part of the Soviet conception of *détente*, and, hence, whether the "overcoming of the blocs," as the propaganda went, was actually the goal of Soviet *détente* strategy. If the overcoming of the blocs, taken literally, was not the goal of *détente*, the next question was how the Soviet Union conceived of the transition to socialism in Western Europe, and in a country such as Italy. One of the basic contradictions of the PCI's internationalism after 1968 was, then, that it based (and justified) its Soviet-aligned internationalism on the need to continue *détente*, while the 1968 crisis had revealed the different understandings of this concept.⁷²

The debates in both the Direzione and the Central Committee demonstrate the centrality of *détente*, but also the awareness of the fundamental misunderstanding regarding its meaning. Most significantly, there was at this point explicit mention of the Soviets' non-revolutionary understanding of it. At the Direzione meeting of 23 August, Occhetto made it quite clear that in his view the Soviets "confuse internationalism with bloc politics."⁷³ While Pajetta stated that the Soviet people had "no overall revolutionary view of the world,"⁷⁴ even Colombi raised the issue of the "superpower nationalism" of the Soviet Union.⁷⁵ Grasping the essence of the problem,

Macaluso accused the Soviets of seeking détente on the basis of the consolidation of the blocs, and stated that “the current strategy of détente is *objectively* obstructing us” [emphasis added].⁷⁶ At the Direzione meeting of 4 October, Amendola made a strong point about the need for the party to focus on the struggle for peace and détente, “not understood as the status quo.”⁷⁷ He also publicly voiced far-reaching criticism of the Soviet Union on the issue of détente. As he wrote in a *Critica marxista* article, “the struggle for peaceful coexistence should be a struggle against the politics of intervention, in military, political and economic terms.”⁷⁸

However, the various debates which developed inside the leadership and in the party ranks regarding its relations with the socialist regimes, and especially regarding Soviet strategy and détente, were cut off at an early stage. This was the consequence of the basic choice, made immediately following the dissent, namely, that a break with the world communist movement and the Soviet Union was impossible. All the public statements following the invasion emphasised that the protests should be understood in the framework of the party’s “critical internationalism.” This was, firstly, a choice for maintaining Soviet-aligned internationalism as a matter of identity, a mental structure and an imperative. It was deeply rooted in the conviction that international alliances were *unavoidable*, for foremost historical reasons. The importance of identity is also reflected in the fact that the question of a break was taboo among the PCI leaders and was at no point openly raised in the otherwise heated discussions of the Direzione following the invasion.⁷⁹ It was, besides, a matter of perceived strategic interests, but not in the sense in which this has been interpreted in the literature.⁸⁰ While the PCI leadership after the invasion fully understood that a strategic divergence existed with the Soviet Union regarding détente, it remained convinced that there was, *in the given circumstances*, no alternative in terms of a global alliance that had similar potential and scope as the Soviet-aligned world had.

Limits to the debate on European strategy and détente were in the first instance imposed at the CC meeting of 29 August. The interconnections between the invasion, détente and socialism in the West were not spelled out in Longo’s report or in the conclusions, although many interventions had raised it.⁸¹ To be sure, Longo’s report discerned some elements of the problems regarding détente, and primarily the need for the “overcoming of the blocs” was reaffirmed. However, although this was brought into connection with the invasion, the exact connection between the two issues was not spelled out, as this would raise the question of internal bloc détente.

Instead, attention was focused on the increased East–West tension it was expected to provoke. The responsibility for this was inverted, and the “imperialist forces” in Italy, Europe and the world were blamed for it.⁸² The old Zhdanovian thesis that it was the forces of imperialism which had imposed the bloc division on Europe, which in recent years had been downplayed in party texts, was now reaffirmed.⁸³

The issue of interdependence between the developments in Eastern and Western Europe was noted implicitly, in the assertion that both Italy and Czechoslovakia had everything to lose from intensified Cold War tensions.⁸⁴ But it was no longer spelled out that this interdependence also meant that the Western communist parties were negatively affected, in very real strategic terms, by the invasion. Furthermore, the point was often made that the boundaries of the communist world did not coincide with the frontiers of the socialist states. This was a protestation against disregarding the interests of the out-of-government parties, but it was also more than that. In the context of the invasion, it suggested that the Soviets and their allies considered that these frontiers did coincide. In early September this was spelled out explicitly: in an *Unità* article Occhetto criticized the Soviet leaders for taking the frontiers of the socialist states as the frontiers of socialism.⁸⁵ Thereafter, however, criticism of the Soviet Union on this issue was no longer made. Instead, the distinction between the communist world and the communist bloc, at a further stage, enabled the PCI to distance itself from the latter while remaining a part of the former. In other words, in order to redefine its status in the global movement, the PCI needed to introduce this distinction.

From then on, in its public statements, the leadership limited itself to discerning particular elements of this problem and criticizing Soviet détente policy on particular points. Longo’s CC report said that the socialist states had in recent years failed to develop a sufficiently *active* policy of détente and had too often taken a *defensive* attitude vis-à-vis the capitalist West.⁸⁶ This phrase now became the systematic metaphor for the question of whether the Soviet Union still supported the transformation towards socialism in the West. The limitations to the debate on internationalism, and the terms in which it was going to be put, were made clear in an interview with Longo by the non-communist journal *Astrolabio*. Longo certainly went quite far here in his criticism of the socialist regimes, stating that many of the problems which the 20th CPSU had addressed had remained unre-

solved. At the same time, however, it was not the Soviet Union but the non-communist forces in Italy which were criticized for conceiving d  tente as being based on the consolidation of the blocs.⁸⁷

3.1.3. *Responses to further developments*

Up to the signing of the Moscow Protocol, the PCI in its public statements and press reports maintained its firm line of solidarity with the CPCS and the Czechoslovak people, as well as its disregard of Soviet interpretations. The Vysocany Congress was reported upon in a positive light, recognized as valid, and considered as representative of wider public opinion.⁸⁸ While the Czechoslovak leaders and people were praised for their calm and dignity, the demonstrations and strikes in protest at the invasion were covered positively.⁸⁹ By contrast, the responses to the Moscow Protocol represented a first retreat from this line and suggested a willingness to comply with power relations in the communist world. The PCI leadership was skeptical with regard to the outcome of the protocol. It did not, however, make this explicit: the party press reproduced the TASS communication of the Moscow Protocol without further comment. *Unit  * took as its point of reference Dub  ek and Svoboda and their guarantees to the people that they would continue the new course.

The CC resolution of 29 August appreciated positively the fact that "in such a dramatic situation" it had been possible to "find a path of negotiations and to avert the danger of more tragic developments," while at the same time restating the need for the withdrawal of troops.⁹⁰ With this interpretation, the PCI leadership feigned belief in a negotiated compromise between two equal partners.⁹¹ Regarding the treaty on the "temporary stationing" of Soviet troops, the Direzione members could not agree upon a public statement of protest, even though the real conditions of the treaty were well understood.⁹² The majority in the Direzione, however, considered that it was not the actual situation in Czechoslovakia that was of prime importance but rather the effect in the world communist movement, particularly with regard to the question of communist party autonomy.⁹³

The PCI leadership's interest in the events in Czechoslovakia further decreased, a fact which became very clear after Galluzzi's trip to Prague in early October. Galluzzi's report to the Direzione raised important points, such as the attempts by the Soviet troops to undermine the power of the Dub  ek group, the emergence of "anti-Soviet feelings and anti-socialist tendencies," and the request from the CPCS to insist, in the context of the

world communist movement, on sovereignty, détente and democracy. Nevertheless, a profound debate on these issues, as was initiated immediately following the invasion, was now no longer taken up.⁹⁴ Czechoslovakia increasingly disappeared from the agenda of the PCI leadership debates. It was channeled into issues considered more relevant to the party itself: autonomy and relations within the world communist movement, and détente. The Brezhnev Doctrine, however, profoundly shocked the PCI leaders, as they interpreted it as a marked change, both in theory and practice, with far-reaching consequences in the wider communist world. As Occhetto put it: "...to us, the theorization is worse than the invasion."⁹⁵

3.2. *The PCF*

3.2.1. *The genesis of the decision*

On the morning of the invasion, the Bureau politique of the PCF issued a statement in which it expressed its "surprise and reprobation" in the face of the "military intervention."⁹⁶ The text had been drafted by Waldeck Rochet and Kanapa.⁹⁷ It was approved without amendments and without a vote. The BP meeting was attended by Rochet, Kanapa, J. Duclos, R. Guyot, F. Billoux, E. Fajon, B. Frachon, G. Plissonnier, R. Leroy, G. Marchais and R. Piquet.⁹⁸ Absent from the meeting were R. Garaudy and J. Thorez-Vermeersch, both on their way back from Moscow to Paris. The PCF sent this statement to all of the ruling communist parties in Eastern Europe. The very adoption of this statement marked a break with the PCF's usual loyalty vis-à-vis Moscow. It was made possible, firstly, by the sense of urgency and the confusion of the situation; and secondly, by the authoritarian habits in the PCF leadership which made it difficult to disagree with a position taken by the secretary general. The PCF's protest against the invasion was a more abrupt break with the party's traditions of loyal Soviet-aligned internationalism than it was in the case of the PCI, but it was not a more profound one. It followed the Rochet-Kanapa line of concern with domestic position and domestic strategy and was an expression of the party's ideal-vision on internationalism and the organization of the communist world, which ignored the centrality of Soviet dominance in the existing situation.⁹⁹

At the same time, it was immediately clear that the dissent over the invasion did not in any way lead to a questioning of the party's internationalism. Moreover, it was clear from the outset that the statement of 22 August was the furthest the PCF was willing and able to stretch its dissidence. The

party now initiated a process of systematically limiting the implications of its position of dissent, without ever actually undoing this decision, although it came very close. The first step in this process was a Central Committee meeting on the day following the BP meeting. In a dramatic atmosphere, the CC adopted a statement which clearly represented a retreat from the earlier BP statement. It “disapproved” of the invasion rather than expressing reprobation.¹⁰⁰ It echoed the BP statement regarding “our worries about certain developments in Czechoslovakia,” and added to this that “the actions of these forces [hostile to socialism] did not elicit the necessary political and ideological responses.” Furthermore, the statement did not include an explicit reference to the fact that relations with the Soviet Union should be based on a set of principles, as had been proposed by CC member M. Simon.¹⁰¹

As in the Bureau politique statement, the dissent was framed in the “spirit of proletarian internationalism.” But the CC statement added the PCF’s intention to stimulate unity and co-operation between communist parties and emphasized its ties of friendship with the Soviet Communist Party. The difference between the two statements gave rise to fierce polemics between the PCF and other political forces in France.¹⁰² The CC statement indeed reflected the concessions that had to be made to the Soviet loyalists. At the meeting, criticism of the Rochet line was violent and of a double nature. Thorez-Vermeersch most clearly and vigorously expressed her disagreement with the BP statement and attacked Garaudy, who had spoken in favor of a more clear-cut distancing from the Soviet Union. Duclos, by not calling her to order, suggested at least his partial agreement with her. Given the personal prestige of the former Resistance fighter, this placed pressure on the dissent line. It was indeed the end of Rochet’s short-lived rebellion against the Soviet Union.¹⁰³

3.2.2. *Arguments and motives: the centrality of sovereignty*

The arguments which the PCF invoked in its disagreement with the invasion were in line with its earlier interpretations of the crisis of the world communist movement. These were the following:

1. negotiations and “brotherly debate” as modes of interaction between communist parties rather than violence and interference, referring to Čierna and Bratislava (in both BP and CC statements)

2. the free determination of communist parties (in both BP and CC statements)
3. state sovereignty (in both BP and CC statements)
4. the unity of the world socialist forces (only in the CC statement)
5. security and peace in Europe (only in the CC statement)
6. the “*national* policy of peace, independence, democracy and socialism” of the PCF (only in the CC statement; emphasis added).

Like the PCF's earlier attitudes with regard to the Prague Spring, these were formalistic arguments relating to the organization of the communist world rather than substance-related support for the project that the Prague Spring had been. Furthermore, in comparison to the PCI there was far less insistence on détente. Instead, the PCF insisted in its statements on state sovereignty. This was connected to the argument of autonomy for communist parties in the world communist movement, but had, as we will see, a significance of its own. Furthermore, in an internal analysis of the situation by the Bureau politique of mid-September, other motives were mentioned, related mostly to the effects on the world communist movement on the one hand, and domestic concerns on the other. The deterioration of relations between communist parties, the problem of Chinese criticism, the party's domestic strategy, and the loss of its “influence over the workers” to the benefit of the socialist party were mentioned.¹⁰⁴ Importantly, it was admitted that these disagreements with the invading states reflected disagreements over “fundamental principles” and the concept of proletarian internationalism itself. However, a taboo-breaking statement as this one was at no point made public. Also the internal debate was increasingly silenced and the discussion on internationalism which was carefully initiated here was not further taken up in the party's leading bodies.

As was the case for the PCI, the Czechoslovak crisis touched on all three dimensions of internationalism: the conception of the world communist movement, party strategy and doctrine. However, the problem connected to Soviet strategy in Europe was not a new one to the PCF. In this sense, the invasion was less of a moment of historical disappointment than it was for the PCI. The PCF, as we have seen, had already in 1965 experienced in a very direct way the negative effects of the Soviet strategy of détente on its own domestic strategy. As the PCF, for this reason but also because of its older suspicions regarding peaceful coexistence, did not strongly identi-

fy with the policy of *détente*, *détente* was not an important argument underpinning its dissent. Also with regard to doctrine and the concept of socialism, the invasion came as less of a shock to the PCF than to the PCI. It was only a shock to the extent that the PCF had (officially) regarded the Prague Spring to be socialist and not counter-revolutionary in nature, and the Soviet Union now clearly held a different view. However, as we have seen, its sympathy for the Prague Spring was low and its reading of it as not counter-revolutionary had come about as a result of domestic pressures rather than a fundamental analysis. As the PCF had never connected the Prague Spring to its own domestic strategy, the question of the nature of the Prague Spring was of secondary importance to the party.

The argument of state sovereignty was central; this was remarkable, as in the logic of “orthodox” doctrine, to which the PCF claimed to adhere, it made little sense. Either a counter-revolutionary situation existed in Czechoslovakia, in which case an intervention was needed and justified, or such a situation did not exist, which continued to be the PCF’s official reading of the events. State sovereignty, as invoked here by the PCF, was not a universal principle. The PCF disagreed with the invasion *only because*, in its analysis of the situation in Czechoslovakia, the CPCS would have been capable of solving all problems, although “anti-socialist elements” had been operative. Waldeck Rochet, in an interview with Radio Luxembourg, said that “intervention” would have been needed had the CPCS no longer been capable of handling the situation alone.¹⁰⁵

Thus the PCF’s concept of sovereignty was, like Brezhnev’s, a “limited” one and as such not necessarily in tension with Soviet-aligned internationalism. The problem was, rather, the fact that sovereignty, in a general sense, was such an important source of legitimation to the PCF, through which the party aspired to expand its domestic support. The insistence on *French* state sovereignty, as we have seen, was a constant feature of the PCF’s conception of the relation between national belonging and internationalism. In the Cold War context, sovereignty had never been considered to be contradictory to internationalism, but, instead, supportive of it, as it was connected to anti-imperialism and anti-American feelings. It had always been assumed in a non-problematic way that state sovereignty, in the case of the future socialist France, would not be in contradiction with Soviet-aligned internationalism. The central problem which the invasion of Czechoslovakia raised for the PCF was that it broke the illusion of an unproblematic relation between Soviet-aligned internationalism and state sovereignty. Behind this lay the

strategic question of the relation between the future socialist France and the Soviet Union *as states*, and the position of this state in the communist *bloc*. As the PCF had always considered its position as a party in the historical world communist movement to be privileged, the assumption of a privileged position of a socialist France in the communist bloc had also been implicit.

The centrality of sovereignty and the link with internationalism, as the PCF leadership at this point saw it, was expressed sharply in a note by Kanapa of September 1968.¹⁰⁶ Kanapa here made it clear that the PCF's concept of sovereignty was not an absolute one, and that the PCF did not have objections in principle against interference in communist parties or states. However, it was emphasized that national independence was one of the bases of communist internationalism and solidarity, and that one of the "historical functions" of the revolutionary movement was to bring about sovereign *states*. Communism went hand in hand with sovereignty, as capitalism went hand in hand with imperialism; it was impossible for the French communists to imagine the breaking up of these connections. The Brezhnev Doctrine, then, undermined the PCF's sovereignty-based argumentation against the invasion. After its (unofficial) pronouncement, the PCF systematically omitted sovereignty when coming back to the invasion and its own disagreement with it. *Humanité* did not even make mention of the Kovalev article of late September or Brezhnev's speech at the Polish Communist Party Congress in November.¹⁰⁷ These blank spots suggested that these events went to the heart of the problem for the PCF. It was impossible for the party to formulate criticism of the Brezhnev Doctrine, as the PCI did, because the doctrine completely disarmed it and undid it of its autonomous theoretical arsenal—which was limited to start with.

As the invasion revealed these deep contradictions in the PCF's internationalism, the PCF's analyses of the Soviets' justification for the invasion could not but be evasive and ambiguous. In what was a non-analysis rather than an analysis, the invasion was described in a *Humanité* article by Andrieu as "a terrible error, whatever the intentions of those who have decided upon it."¹⁰⁸ Generally, the PCF press reproduced without further comment the Soviet statements providing arguments in favor of the invasion, thereby implicitly distancing itself from them.¹⁰⁹ In none of its statements did the PCF express a clear view on the "Appeal for assistance." However, in contrast to the PCI press, *Humanité* did reproduce the version of this letter published by *Pravda*, without further comment.¹¹⁰ In doing so, the PCF took on a very vague position regarding the issue; this from the

very beginning undermined the coherence of its argument. The PCF never made any public mention of the question of “imperialist infiltration” through agents, and the weapon deposits. The party press here did not even publish the Soviet statements on this issue, which, again, suggested its skepticism. Nonetheless, at the CC meeting of October in Ivry, the Plissonnier report stated that there had been no “invitation” and no counter-revolutionary situation, although, it was repeated, anti-socialist forces had been active in Czechoslovakia.¹¹¹

3.2.3. *Responses to further events*

Humanité reported on the situation in Czechoslovakia in the following days in a neutral and non-interpretative way, often merely reproducing statements from the Soviet and Czechoslovak press agencies without further comment. In contrast to the PCI press it did not wish to rely on clandestine information sources in Czechoslovakia, but it did publish all of the CPCS statements in protest against the invasion and gave ample coverage of the arguments advanced by Dubček and other CPCS leaders. Importantly, the Vysocany Congress was reported as an important event, emphasizing the consensus of confidence in Dubček.¹¹² This followed on from its earlier interpretation of the Prague Spring. Furthermore, it referred widely to the position of the PCI and other critical parties, including the Romanian and Yugoslav parties.¹¹³

Like the PCI, the PCF presented the Moscow talks as a discussion between equals rather than the imposition of Soviet demands on the Czechoslovaks. The PCF press did not publish the TASS communications, but only the speeches by Dubček and Svoboda in which they promised the gradual but full withdrawal of the troops and called upon the population for support.¹¹⁴ At this point, the PCF’s understanding of “normalization” still implied the withdrawal of the troops.¹¹⁵ Also Rochet, in his interview with Radio Luxembourg on 26 August, explicitly stated that the Moscow agreements included the withdrawal of the troops and the restoration of the sovereignty of Czechoslovakia, albeit “within the framework of its international obligations.”¹¹⁶ As in the case of the PCI, the PCF leadership was perfectly aware of the extent of Soviet interference in Czechoslovak politics.¹¹⁷ Soon, however, the PCF and its press shifted to a position on the Moscow Protocol which emphasized the CPCS’s obligations. Thus the obligations of the Soviet Union (the withdrawal of the troops) were increasingly overshadowed by Czechoslovakia’s “international obligations,” namely,

the re-establishment of “orthodox” socialism and the maintenance of its international alignment. The BP communication of 27 August no longer mentioned the withdrawal of the troops,¹¹⁸ and the BP communication of 2 September stated that Czechoslovakia’s loyalty to the Warsaw Pact was a condition for troop withdrawal.¹¹⁹ Henceforth, the issue of the continuing presence of the troops was systematically omitted from PCF public analyses of the situation in Czechoslovakia.¹²⁰ This was the direct consequence, as is demonstrated below, of Soviet pressure.

4. THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY: PARTY CRISIS AND DOMESTIC TENSION

The invasion, their protest against it and their unwillingness to break ties with the communist world put the two parties in a complex situation. The immediate consequences were twofold: firstly, the leaderships of these parties engaged in a “politics of identity and unity” inside the party and on the domestic level; and secondly, they were faced with an acute crisis in their relations with the world communist movement. The politics of identity and unity included the mechanisms discussed in the first chapter: sharply distinguishing between the included and the excluded, an emphasis on the teleology and the historical project as well as on symbols, and organizational discipline. There was an urgent sense of a need to “save the party.” Among the party members, the crisis of identity found its expression in open disagreement with the leadership. Criticism of the leadership was, in the first instance, rather blurred and based on impulsive reactions following the dramatic events rather than thought-through arguments. As we will see in the next chapter, at a later stage more fundamental and encompassing disagreement with the leadership formed itself in the two cases. Internal divisions in the parties crystallized around the issue of Czechoslovakia up to the early 1970s. From the available sources, only a general picture of the extent of the disagreement with the leadership immediately following the dissent can be discerned. While our focus remains on the leaderships and not on the rank and file, it is important also to gain a general idea of the situation in the wider parties. Opinions in the party body obviously pressured the leaders towards certain modifications, but it was also the case that the argument of opinions among the party ranks was often used by leaders to justify their own positions.

The fact that these policies embittered relations with domestic political partners on the Left was at this point considered of secondary importance by the communist party leaders. A temporary revival of Cold War antagonism took place—although clearly more so in Italy than in France—in which not only the communist parties needed to mark their specific identity but also the non-communist groups needed to demonstrate their being different from Soviet-aligned communism. However, the Czechoslovak crisis bore no negative effects on the domestic implant of these parties in the short term, with respect to either adherents or voters. The adherence figures in the case of the PCI, and most probably also in the case of the PCF, rose slightly between 1968 and 1969. Although segments of the membership left the party after August 1968, this was compensated by an influx of new members in the context of the radicalization on the Left in both countries in 1968–1969.¹²¹ In terms of votes, the PCF at the presidential elections of 1969 obtained a better score than at the parliamentary elections of 1968. Also the PCI improved its score at the parliamentary elections of 1972 with respect to those of 1968.¹²²

4.1. *The PCI*

4.1.1. *Disagreements in the party*

While there was, and remained, a consensus in the Direzione on the dissent itself, different interpretations of the events in Czechoslovakia existed. A minority position was taken by Colombi and Cossutta, who argued that the Soviets had had their motives. Cossutta tended to give credit to the “Appeal for assistance,” and Colombi considered that the situation in Czechoslovakia had been alarming at the moment of the invasion.¹²³ More disagreement existed on how to judge the post-invasion events in Czechoslovakia and how to deal with the Soviets. The most radical position, assumed at this point especially by Galluzzi, Macaluso and Terracini, argued for the strict maintaining of the critical position on Soviet policy in Czechoslovakia, insisted on the withdrawal of the troops, and refused to deal with a possible post-Dubček leadership.¹²⁴ An influential centrist position argued for the channeling of the Czechoslovak crisis into the transforming of the party’s internationalism, either in terms of the evaluation of the socialist regimes or in terms of actual party autonomy. While Pajetta and Occhetto argued in favour of this first point, Berlinguer in particular emphasized the second.¹²⁵ Amendola, while wishing to channel the dissent

over Czechoslovakia into the issues of peace and détente, expressly argued against a debate on the nature of the socialist regimes.¹²⁶ Longo agreed with Berlinguer and Pajetta but stressed the adherence to the socialist camp. Longo's position at this point shifted. While he was the crucial actor behind the position of dissent, and indeed never questioned this position, during the weeks following this decision he constantly exerted pressure towards the limitation of the most critical debates regarding détente and the nature of the socialist regimes. In doing so he always carefully avoided causing rifts in the leadership.¹²⁷

In the Central Committee and the middle-rank leadership, there was broad agreement with the line of dissent. At the CC meeting of 27–29 August, only one member, A. Donini, spoke against the dissent. A few CC members emphasized the links with the Soviet Union or the “special role” assumed by it in the global struggle.¹²⁸ Far more important, on the other hand, was the pressure towards a position more critical of the Soviet Union. Many argued that the party now needed to “go further,” either in terms of reconsidering the organization of the communist world, or in terms of the analysis of the socialist regimes. For example, B. Reichlin raised the issue of whether the Soviet Union could still be trusted in supporting revolution in the West.¹²⁹ L. Pintor went furthest in this respect and raised fundamental criticism of the Soviet Union: the positions of its leaders were not in line with the international class struggle, and socialist society had been constructed without the input of the masses.¹³⁰ This was almost equal to saying, in Maoist fashion, that the Soviet Union was not truly socialist.

As to the party rank and file, it is hard to gain a detailed picture. In sum, the discussions in the Direzione and in the CC point to “radical” criticism among the party ranks rather than “pro-Soviet” criticism. Only few serious problems were reported to the Direzione at this stage; there were incidents of party militants expressing support for the Soviet Union, for example among the dockworkers of Genoa.¹³¹ Some recollections point at the persistence of Soviet-loyal feelings among the party militants.¹³² These *post factum* interpretations, however, carry a danger. After the PCI's partial alignment with the communist world and its acceptance of the “normalization” in Czechoslovakia (which will be dealt with below), the existence of pro-Soviet party militants was invoked by some party leaders as a justification for their own Soviet-loyal position.

4.1.2. *The domestic Cold War*

The dominant pressure exerted on the PCI from its domestic environment was towards distancing itself from the communist world, which indeed occurred at a later stage. The PCI's main domestic partner, the PSU, condemned the invasion for its "authoritarian logic," asked for the withdrawal of the troops and proposed a meeting of the UN Security Council.¹³³ Initially, it reacted positively to the dissent expressed by the PCI. Lombardi, representing the Left in the PSU, defined the PCI's dissent as an important step towards the unity of the Left in Italy. However, the PSU very soon started to put pressure on the communists, challenging them to go further in their criticism of the socialist regimes and to denounce the "normalization" process. The Christian Democratic Party and the Right intensified their anti-communist propaganda. Accusations were made, for instance, about the PCI having been involved in the decision to invade, or about Longo having bargained a deal in Moscow with the Soviets on the dissent. The polemics against the PCI were aggravated when it became clear that the PCI would not break its ties with the communist world.¹³⁴ The centre-left government issued a number of statements which sharply criticized the Soviet Union and the communist regimes. Despite Nenni's continued emphasis on détente and the overcoming of the military blocs, the PSU too was drawn into a position of revived anti-communism, which temporarily isolated the PCI.¹³⁵

The PCI often anticipated these attacks by emphasizing the "struggle against anti-Sovietism," both internally and publicly. It needed to mark its being different from non-communist groups which had also disagreed with the invasion, the PSU in the first place. The PCI press intensified its anti-imperialist discourses with reference to American military presence in Europe and Italy. This allowed it to respond to the charge that it did not break its ties with the Soviet Union.¹³⁶ The identity of the party was at this point reconstructed on the basis of a desire for East–West détente understood as East–West relaxation *and* the dissolution of the Atlantic and communist blocs. However, while strongly arguing against the re-emergence of a Zhdanovian Cold War logic on the European and international level, the PCI did fall into the trap of the domestic Cold War.

The radical Left groups and the PSIUP assumed incoherent positions on the Czechoslovak crisis, which, on the whole, did not succeed in pressuring the PCI in any clear direction. In a first statement, the PSIUP deplored the invasion but implicitly justified it by mirroring it to the American interven-

tion in Vietnam and the American military presence in Italy. A second statement, however, criticized the PCI for reinforcing anti-Sovietism by disagreeing over the invasion. The PSIUP's judgement of the PCI was contradictory: while criticizing the Soviet Union and the Soviet-aligned communist world for imperialism, it argued that further alienation from the world communist movement would lead the PCI to become even more "revisionist" and reformist.¹³⁷ This was also largely the position of leftist, proto-Maoist groups. For all their inconsistencies, the positions of the radial Left did not succeed in directly influencing the PCI's position, although, as we will see in the next chapter, an indirect impact was felt via the *Manifesto* affair.

4.2. *The PCF*

4.2.1. *The disorientation in the party*

Internal party devastation was generally greater in the PCF than in the PCI, and this on the level of the leadership as well as among the rank and file. Moreover, the PCF leadership was faced with a group of intellectuals who were openly critical of the party line on several issues. Furthermore, while criticism of the leadership in the PCI case was, largely, of a "radical" nature, the situation inside the PCF was more complex, notably due to a number of highly influential leaders who, if they did not openly disagree with the dissent, wished to contain its effects on the party's internationalism. In contrast to the situation in the PCI Direzione, there was no unanimity on the basic position of dissent in the Bureau politique of the PCF. Despite the fact that the dissent statement was passed in the Bureau politique, an important minority of its members did not warmly support it. In contrast to the PCI, the "conservative" critique here was far more influential than the "radical" critique. As to the first group, most outspoken was J. Thorez-Vermeersch, who resigned from the Bureau politique and the CC in late October.¹³⁸ Not only did she argue against open disagreement with the Soviet Union for reasons of tradition and obedience, she also disapproved of the Prague Spring and considered the invasion necessary. The resignation of the widow of the former leader, and the fact that she invoked the memory of the latter, was highly important in symbolic terms.

Besides her, there were in the Bureau politique a few influential Soviet loyalists, who nevertheless agreed with the dissent. As we have seen, Duclos assumed a strategic position immediately following the invasion: while, for reasons of party unity, he adhered to the Rochet-Kanapa position of dissent, he clearly did not wish to push the criticism of the Soviet Union any

further. He soon succeeded in pressuring the central line towards a more "conservative" position. While Fajon backed his stance, Plissonnier, and for the time being Marchais, supported the general secretary, though rather for reasons of discipline than conviction. While Rochet attempted to reconcile the various positions, Kanapa was the only Bureau politique leader who strongly and continuously argued in favor of the initiation of a more fundamental debate in the party on certain aspects of internationalism; he was supported only by Piquet and Frachon.¹³⁹

"Radical" disagreement with the leadership, in the form of criticism for retreating from its initial position of dissent, was expressed mainly by intellectuals. In the Bureau politique, this was the position held only by Garaudy. Garaudy, who had earlier disagreed with the party line on the May-June events,¹⁴⁰ now started to diverge from the party line on Czechoslovakia and internationalism. In an interview with *Le Monde* in late August, he called for the unconditional withdrawal of the troops, warned for a return to Stalinist practices in the communist world and urged the Soviet leaders to "draw the right lessons" in order to "once more become worthy of what was the party of Lenin."¹⁴¹ Following an attack on these statements in *Humanité*, Garaudy wrote a private letter to Rochet in which he raised fundamental questions touching upon the different aspects of internationalism: the Central Committee should have gone further in its critique of the invasion; the party should completely break its ties of solidarity itself with the invaders and should disagree with the Moscow Protocol; and it should open a debate on the types of socialism in the PCF program, in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.¹⁴²

In the immediate post-invasion situation, the central leadership's method with regard to the party was intense persuasion and psychological pressure rather than repression.¹⁴³ Rochet made the federal committees discuss the Czechoslovak events and adopt a statement of support for the party line.¹⁴⁴ This was an unusual procedure, considered necessary by Rochet for several reasons. Conscious of the resistance which the dissent encountered in the party, he genuinely wished to be informed of the opinions in the party. At the same time, it was the first in a series of initiatives intended to force the party body to accept the party line. The "debates" in the federal committees were a matter of persuasion; this was clear, for example, from a "scheme with points of interpretation" sent round by the Bureau politique to the federal secretaries that restated the party interpretation of the entire Czechoslovak crisis, the definition of internationalism

and the relations with the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, as Rochet (and Kanapa) must have felt pretty assured that at least a majority in the party was with them, this was a way of reinforcing their position inside the central leadership.

The result, however, was the uncovering of a profound and generalized crisis. Although, having no real choice, all the federal committees issued statements in support of the leadership, disagreement inside the federations proved to be widespread. The picture drawn by Rochet himself was the following: 40 per cent of the party members had been in favor of the invasion but were loyal to the party leadership; 20 per cent were in open disagreement with the leadership; and only 40 per cent of the party members agreed with the interpretation of the Czechoslovak events.¹⁴⁶ The types of critique expressed were dominantly of a “conservative” and pro-Soviet nature. Nevertheless, there were also cells and federations, particularly in the industrial suburbs surrounding Paris (*la banlieue rouge*), in which the dominant attitude was one of anger with the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁷ Criticism of the leadership was nourished by older critiques of the party line. This involved, firstly, criticism of the changes in the party’s internationalism and the non-acceptance of its somewhat more independent stance vis-à-vis the world communist movement and the Soviet Union since the mid-1960s. It also involved criticism of domestic strategy and the non-acceptance of significant variations in national conceptions of socialism, including *both* the “French road” and the Prague Spring.¹⁴⁸ Both these types of criticism questioned the very foundations of the party’s strategy under Waldeck Rochet. Furthermore, at the Central Committee of late October 1968 held in Ivry, most unusually a number of federal committees did not approve of the resolutions.¹⁴⁹ Disagreement with the party line was stimulated, probably in a significant way, by direct Soviet and East German interference in the party, through the sending of propaganda material to individual militants.¹⁵⁰

4.2.2. *Domestic indifference*

Compared to the PCI, the PCF was less pressured by its domestic situation to condemn the invasion or to criticize the Soviet Union. According to public opinion polls, the opinions of the French public on the PCF were, in 1968–1969, only to a limited extent dependent on events in the communist world and on the PCF’s realignment with the communist world after the invasion. The number of people considering the PCF “too Soviet-aligned”

rose between 1968 and 1969, though only from 44 per cent to 49 per cent of the total group of respondents. After 1969 and up to 1976, this number went down again to 38 per cent. The share of PCF “sympathizers” (adherents and voters) considering the party too Soviet-aligned between 1968 and 1969 actually went down from 37 per cent to 29 per cent, which is related to the internal realignment of the party (see the next chapters).¹⁵¹

De Gaulle reacted to the invasion in a strikingly meek way: the French government “deplored” the invasion in a moderate statement and referred, in its motivations, only to European détente.¹⁵² Although positions soon polarized and the Gaullists did enter into a dynamic of anti-communism, their judgements of the Soviet Union and the invasion were complex and moderate, which posed a problem to the PCF. In early October, the minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Debré, in a speech to parliament, developed a critical analysis of Soviet foreign policy. His analysis was insightful: the invasion demonstrated that the Soviet Union held a different view of détente than Gaullist France did, the former adhering to a policy which tended towards an arrangement between the superpowers, and the latter striving for an upsetting of the global Cold War constellation in which continental Europe as a whole would have a new role to play.¹⁵³ This analysis, to some extent similar to the one made by the PCI leadership, touched the Achilles heel of the PCF’s relationship with the Soviet Union. However, the fact that the Gaullist Right attributed this analysis to itself, and the fact that early European détente had allied Gaullist France and the Soviet Union, made it difficult for the PCF to hold the same view.

If the Gaullist Right did not pressure the PCF into a more Soviet-critical stance, neither did the forces of the reformist Left do so. Following the May 1968 events, the socialists faced a profound organizational and strategic crisis, which reflected a general state of disorientation: Mitterrand was severely attacked by the SFIO, and the dissolution of the FGDS was under way.¹⁵⁴ Mitterrand initially responded very positively to the PCF’s dissent, stating that “an obstacle has been lifted between us and our communist neighbors.”¹⁵⁵ The SFIO was more negative, refusing to refer to the PCF in its statement of condemnation of the invasion.¹⁵⁶ From September on, the SFIO started to criticize the PCF for its line regarding the “normalization” and put to the communists the choice between “absolute obedience to the Soviet Union and the Union de la gauche.”¹⁵⁷

Unsurprisingly, the PCF reacted to the worsening communist-socialist relations by putting all the blame on the socialists and by insisting on its

being different from the latter, highlighting its internationalism. Unlike the PCI, it did not highlight aspects of its internationalism which could have created common ground with the socialists, such as détente and the unity of the European Left. It emphasized, by contrast, the classic Cold War arguments such as the dissolving of NATO (not of the Warsaw Pact) and the “German danger,” on which there was a disconnection with the socialists.¹⁵⁸ The PCF’s traditional emphasis on “orthodoxy” led the party, in a crisis of identity such as the one at hand, to reconstruct its unity and identity on the basis of doctrinal purity and the *communist* teleological perspective, which implied sharply marking the difference with reformist socialism. In the longer term, however, since it was the forces led by the more pragmatic Mitterrand rather than the “old Left” socialists led by Mollet in which the PCF was interested, the temporary Cold War revival did not significantly interfere with the PCF’s domestic strategy.

Le nouvel observateur probably voiced a general feeling of disillusionment on the Left. While initially enthusiastic about the PCF’s dissent, it soon denounced the party’s line on the normalization and urged both the communists and socialists not to minimize the Czechoslovak crisis for the sake of the Union de la gauche.¹⁵⁹ The far Left, generally, did not develop strong arguments on the invasion.¹⁶⁰ *Lutte ouvrière* and *Rouge* strongly condemned the invasion, without, however, taking up the defense of Dubček. The judgement of the former group on the PCF position was, as in the case of the PSIUP in Italy, a blend of anti-imperialist, radical-revolutionary and anti-reformist critiques. On the one hand, it violently attacked the Soviet Union and its imperialism; on the other, it equally criticized the dissent expressed by the PCF and judged it to be inspired by “a wish to please Mitterrand and Mollet.”¹⁶¹

CONCLUDING REMARKS

To the PCI, the main shock of the invasion was to do with European strategy: it revealed that the Soviet Union held a very different concept of détente than the one it held itself, and which was so important to its domestic strategy. Its own concept of détente had been based on the prospect of the “overcoming of the blocs,” and, hence, changing relations inside both the communist world and the Western world. The invasion of Czechoslovakia demonstrated a different Soviet view on détente. To the PCF, by

contrast, the main shock of the invasion was the tension it revealed between internationalism and (state) sovereignty. Although the PCF's concept of sovereignty was also "limited," the fact that the limited character of state sovereignty in the communist bloc was made explicit threatened, for the PCF, to undermine sovereignty as a basis of domestic legitimacy. Furthermore, both parties protested against the invasion because of the limitation to varieties of socialism it revealed and because it damaged the image of communism in the West, and, hence, their own domestic strategy.

However dramatic, the invasion led in neither case to the questioning of internationalism itself. The immediate consequence of this was a "politics of identity and unity" carried out by both party leaderships: restoring party unity, marking the difference from non-communists, a renewed emphasis on the teleology, and so on. The fact that this temporarily embittered relations with the domestic political allies was considered of secondary importance. While, in the case of the PCF, identity and unity were first and foremost reconstructed on the basis of doctrinal purity and communist teleology, in the case of the PCI they were reconstructed on the basis of the struggle for the "overcoming of the blocs" on the international level.

On the whole, the PCI was more strongly pressured by its domestic situation into changing the parameters of its internationalism than was the PCF. The former party was strongly attacked by the socialist and Christian Democratic parties. While the temporary revival of the domestic Cold War in Italy was needed for the PCI leadership to reassess communist identity, it was not, however, a longer-term option, as it was not reconcilable with its line of (international and domestic) détente. In France, the Gaullists kept a rather low profile on the Czechoslovak issue, while the socialists and the FGDS were in a shambles after the May '68 events. Criticism of the PCF line and of the Soviet Union was expressed, rather, by some strands of the independent intellectual Left, and, as we will see further in chapter eight, by many of the PCF intellectuals.

NOTES

1 APCI, Dir, 18/9, 020.0961.

2 Navratil, *Prague Spring*, p. xviii.

3 More details on the casualties in Kramer, "New interpretations," p. 16.

4 Navratil, *Prague Spring*, pp. 411–413.

- 5 To what extent general Dzúr and the armed forces had been informed of the invasion beforehand remains unclear. Williams, *The Prague Spring*, p. 131.
- 6 “Minutes of the U.S. National Security Council Meeting on the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia, 20 August 1968,” in Navratil, *Prague Spring*, pp. 445–446. See also Dawisha, *The Kremlin*, pp. 373–374.
- 7 The United Nations condemned the invasion in an extraordinary meeting. On the West German reaction, which was guided by the wish not to upset *Ostpolitik*, see Garton Ash, *In Europe’s Name*, pp. 57–60.
- 8 For more detail on the reactions in the world communist movement, see chapter 6.
- 9 Dawisha, *The Kremlin*, p. 370–371.
- 10 This text was not identical to the actual “Letter of invitation” written by Indra and others. Navratil, *Prague Spring*, p. 324.
- 11 Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77*, pp. 10–13. See also Williams, who considers the invasion a “*coup de main* to support the *coup d’état*.” Williams, *The Prague Spring*, p. 112.
- 12 Apparently, the Soviet leadership and its allies genuinely believed that the invasion would be backed by a majority in the CPCPS Presidium. See also Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall*, p. 45.
- 13 Svoboda’s attitude was crucial in these days: not only did he convince Dubček not to step down, he also refused to collaborate with the anti-reformist Piller government that was being formed. Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall*, pp. 40–44.
- 14 The statement was repeatedly broadcast over radio and television and published in *Rude Pravo*. Navratil, *Prague Spring*, p. 414.
- 15 Williams, *The Prague Spring*, pp. 125–135.
- 16 The documents adopted are published in Pelikán, *The Secret Vysocny Congress*.
- 17 Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia’s interrupted revolution*, pp. 764–772.
- 18 Dubček only agreed to sign the protocol after reflection and under pressure from the rest of the CPCPS delegation; Kriegel refused to sign the protocol. Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall*, p. 48.
- 19 Ouimet understands the Moscow Protocol as “a matter of saving face” for the Soviets. Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall*, p. 85.
- 20 The text of the Protocol can be found in English translation in Navratil, *Prague Spring*, pp. 477–480.
- 21 Recent archival studies have demonstrated just how strong the conviction was in Moscow that the security interests of the Soviet Union were dependent on the developments in Eastern Europe. Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall*, p. 60.
- 22 The quotations from the Kovalev article and the Brezhnev speech can be found in English translation in Navratil, *Prague Spring*, pp. 502–503.
- 23 Light, *The Soviet theory*, p. 194.
- 24 For more comments on concepts of sovereignty in the early phase of Soviet history, see Fejtő, *L’héritage de Lenine*, pp. 113–159.
- 25 Light, *The Soviet Theory*, pp. 178–181.
- 26 The bulk of the literature considers the process of “normalization” as more or

- less consolidated by April 1969, a periodization which I follow here. See, for example, Gordon Skilling, *Czechoslovakia's interrupted revolution*, epilogue.
- 27 I will use the term "normalization" throughout the analysis not in an uncritical but in a descriptive manner.
 - 28 The total presumed number of émigrés in the years 1968 and 1969 was around 123,000. Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77*, p. 174.
 - 29 Williams, *The Prague Spring*, pp. 144–148.
 - 30 According to Kusin, Dubček probably succeeded in pruning down the much longer Soviet blacklist of reformers to be discarded immediately. Kriegel was expelled from the party in May 1969, Šik emigrated. Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77*, p. 50. Pelikán emigrated to Italy and published from there the critical émigré periodical *Listy*. On the role of the PCI in this, see the following chapter.
 - 31 Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77*, p. 43.
 - 32 Williams, *The Prague Spring*, p. 155.
 - 33 Such a plan was proposed by Špaček. Williams, *The Prague Spring*, p. 156.
 - 34 For more detail on "Dubček's normalization" see Williams, *The Prague Spring*, pp. 144–191.
 - 35 Navratil, *Prague Spring*, p. 533–534.
 - 36 Williams, *The Prague Spring*, pp. 160–161.
 - 37 Furthermore, on several occasions Husák used the Slovak institutions and organizations as an instrument of normalization. Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77*, p. 56.
 - 38 Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77*, pp. 55–56.
 - 39 For more detail on the "realist" tendency see Williams, *The Prague Spring*, pp. 192–209.
 - 40 Williams, *The Prague Spring*, p. 138.
 - 41 It was not only the conservative and Soviet-aligned CPCS leaders who had refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Congress, but also a significant part of the Slovak leadership, including Husák. See Williams, *The Prague Spring*, p. 152.
 - 42 Williams, *The Prague Spring*, p. 183.
 - 43 Accordingly, the party-affiliated but critical weeklies *Reporter* and *Politika* were temporarily banned. Williams, *The Prague Spring*, p. 175.
 - 44 Williams, *The Prague Spring*, pp. 180–181.
 - 45 For the figures of public opinion polls, see Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77*, p. 46.
 - 46 Williams, *The Prague Spring*, p. 177.
 - 47 Smrkovský was excluded from the following CPSU–CPCS summit meeting in Kiev in early December. Williams, *The Prague Spring*, p. 185.
 - 48 Williams, *The Prague Spring*, pp. 189–190.
 - 49 Williams, *The Prague Spring*, p. 200. On Soviet interference in the takeover by Husák, see also Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall*, p. 57.
 - 50 Williams, *The Prague Spring*, pp. 204–206.
 - 51 Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77*, p. 116.
 - 52 Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77*, pp. 85–88.

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- 53 Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77*, p. 72.
- 54 An important resistance group was the Socialist Movement of Czechoslovak Citizens, which issued a statement in October 1970 repeating the Prague Spring values and ideas. The CPCS made an attempt to eliminate the Socialist Movement by demonstrating a connection with the PCI, via Jiří Pelikán and Giovanni Berlinguer, Enrico's brother. Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77*, pp. 149–163.
- 55 Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77*, pp. 160–161.
- 56 The KKE, the Greek Communist Party in exile, was highly divided, part of its leadership condemning the invasion; the clandestine party in Greece condemned the invasion. Also the AKEL of Cyprus was divided. For a detailed overview of the positions of the West European communist parties, see Devlin, "The New Crisis in European Communism," in *Problems of Communism*, November–December 1968, pp. 57–68.
- 57 After 1969, the KPÖ was "normalized" on Soviet terms in a far-reaching way and its reform-minded leaders, such as E. Fischer, were excluded. For the Spanish Communist Party and the origins of Eurocommunism, see chapter 9. For more information on the Austrian and Spanish communist parties and the Czechoslovak crisis, see, for example, Rubbi, *I partiti comunisti*.
- 58 A detailed overview of the positions of the world communist parties and of these organizations, including the arguments invoked and with particular attention to the PCI, is to be found in "Übersicht über die Haltung der kommunistischen und Arbeiterparteien, nationaldemokratischer Parteien und internationaler gesellschaftlicher Organisationen zu den gemeinsamen Hilfsmassnahmen der fünf verbündeten sozialistischen Staaten gegenüber der CCSR," MfAA, C 47/77–1.
- 59 Galluzzi, *La svolta*, p. 202. All these were Direzione members. Giorgio Napolitano was co-ordinator of the Secretariat and was known to be allied to Amendola. Mauro Scoccimarro was a prestigious leader from the interwar period, of the same generation as Togliatti, but had been known as an adversary of the former general secretary. Maurizio Ferrara was editor-in-chief of *Unità*. Armando Cossutta was known as an opponent to change and played an important role, as we will see below, in the non-official contacts with the Soviet Communist Party.
- 60 A discussion of this also took place at the Direzione meeting of 23/8. Besides Longo, Berlinguer and Napolitano were also strongly in favor of an immediate reaction. APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020.0907. See also Mazini, "Luigi Longo," p. 121.
- 61 A report of these events by Longo, APCI, Dir, 23/8/68, 020.0899. Giorgio Napolitano was secretary to the organization, one of the younger Direzione members, and considered as an ally to Amendola. Ferrara later on claimed that Longo had been opposed to the formula "grave dissent." Ajello, N., "La lunga notte di Botteghe oscure," *La Repubblica*, 17/5/2003, p. 40.
- 62 Longo defended his position regarding the letter at the Direzione meeting of 23/8, in response to criticism from Cossutta. Cossutta received a slightly different version of the letter from the Soviet ambassador (referring to "the great majority of the CPCS Presidium and the government" requesting an intervention, rather than "an important number," in Longo's version). APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020.0910.

- 63 Like the PCF, the PCI never used the term "invasion" in its official statements. "Il comunicato dell'Ufficio politico," *Unità*, 21/8/68 (special edition), p. 1.
- 64 APCI, Dir, 23/8/68, passim.
- 65 Immediately following the dissent, the leadership agreed that this type of identification with the communist world and distancing from non-communist forces should be emphasized. APCI, Dir, 23/8/68, passim.
- 66 *Unità* reproduced the TASS communications regarding the appeal for assistance (on 21 August) and regarding the motives for the invasion (on 22 August) without further comments. "La Tass dichiara: Abbiamo accolto una richiesta di aiuto immediato," *Unità*, 22/8, p. 1, "Le motivazioni della Pravda sull'intervento militare," *Unità*, 23/8, p. 1.
- 67 Ferrara, M., "Tesi inaccettabili," *Unità*, p. 3.
- 68 For example, in "Occupata la Cecoslovacchia," *Unità*, 21/8 (special edition), p. 1, it was said that the information was based on sources from Italy, France, the UK and the USA. Moreover, on the morning of the invasion Longo said to Suslov that "the Soviet sources are not our only sources of information" and that "the PCI simply cannot ignore non-official information coming from Czechoslovakia and from the Italian press." Oral report by Longo of his meeting, APCI, Dir, 23/8/68, 020.0902–0904.
- 69 Cossutta accepted the Soviet fear that the upcoming 14th CPCS congress would outvote two-thirds of the CC members; however, this in his view did not justify the invasion, with which he disagreed. APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020–0917–1918.
- 70 APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020.0914.
- 71 See also below for the CC meeting mentioned here.
- 72 Sassoon has also noted that the misunderstanding regarding détente was the central problem which the invasion posed to the PCI. Sassoon, *The Strategy*, pp. 216–217. However, much of the literature has either disregarded the dimension of détente in the analysis of the Czechoslovak crisis in the PCI, or has misinterpreted it. Pons' argument that the dissent over the invasion marked the end of the ambiguities between the PCI's allegiance to the SU in terms of foreign policy and its domestic belonging overlooks in my view, the contradiction related to the different concepts of détente (Pons, "L'URSS e il PCI," p. 30).
- 73 APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020.0926.
- 74 APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020.0922.
- 75 APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020.0917.
- 76 APCI, Dir, 18/9, 020.0961.
- 77 APCI, Dir, 4/10, 020.1043.
- 78 Amendola, G., "25 anni dopo l'internazionale comunista," in *Critica marxista*, VI, n.4–5, Luglio–Ottobre 1968, pp. 63–87, p. 84.
- 79 Cossutta later reported that Longo had rhetorically raised the question in a private conversation with him: "To give up our autonomy would be absolutely impossible [...] but can we be a revolutionary party without being internationalist, rejecting the bonds of common struggle with the USSR?" Quoted in: Riva, *Oro da Mosca*, pp. 369–370.
- 80 Hoebel, "Il PCI, il '68 cecoslovacco," pp. 1171–1172.

- 81 “Luigi Longo: Sui fatti di Cecoslovacchia, Rapporto al CC,” PCI, ed., *Il Partito comunista italiano*, pp. 314–361.
- 82 “Luigi Longo: Sui fatti di Cecoslovacchia,” in PCI, ed., *Il Partito comunista italiano*, pp. 335–336.
- 83 “Luigi Longo: Sui fatti di Cecoslovacchia,” in PCI, ed., *Il Partito comunista italiano*, p. 354.
- 84 “Luigi Longo: Sui fatti di Cecoslovacchia,” PCI, ed., *Il Partito comunista italiano*, p. 336.
- 85 Occhetto, A., “Autonomia e internazionalismo,” *Unità*, 1/9/68, p. 3.
- 86 “Luigi Longo, Sui fatti di Cecoslovacchia,” in (PCI, ed.) *Il Partito comunista italiano*, p. 355–356.
- 87 “Intervista all’Astrolabio del compagno Luigi Longo,” 8/9/68, in *Documenti politici dal XIo al XIIo Congresso*, pp. 507–519.
- 88 “Dal nostro inviato” [Boffa], *Unità*, 23/8, p. 1.
- 89 Moreover, the tone of the PCI press coverage at times completely broke with the usual lexicographic codes; for example, the leaflets distributed by the Soviet soldiers were dismissed as “unsuccessful propaganda.” “Un’altra drammatica giornata di attesa a Praga,” *Unità*, p. 16.
- 90 “Risoluzione del CC e della CCC del Partito comunista italiano sull’intervento in Cecoslovacchia,” *Unità*, 29/8/68.
- 91 Also Mazini argues that the PCI leaders at this point were well aware of the fact that the CPCS leaders in Moscow had not signed the agreement as autonomous actors. Mazini, “Luigi Longo,” p. 123.
- 92 Natta stated at the early October meeting that, firstly, the Soviet troops did not intend to leave in the near future, and secondly that there was direct interference in the state and party apparatuses. APCI, Dir, 4/10/68, 020.1080.
- 93 While Natta, Terracini and Ingrao argued for a public statement of protest, Berlinguer proposed the expression of a “careful reservation,” and Longo proposed consulting the PCF first and waiting for reactions in the (Italian) press—which was accepted. APCI, Dir, 4/10, 020.1079–1084.
- 94 Longo at this point cut the debate by suggesting to focus on the question of the World Communist Conference rather than on Czechoslovakia. APCI, Dir, 4/10, 1074–1079.
- 95 APCI, Dir, 8/11/68, 020.1146.
- 96 “Déclaration du bureau politique du PCF,” 21/8/68.
- 97 Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 507.
- 98 A similar point in is made in Konopnicki, “Prague 68,” p. 38–39.
- 99 On the other hand, the adoption of this BP statement was clearly more than the inevitable consequence of the PCF’s positions in July (as has been argued by Fauvet, Duhamel, *Histoire du PCF*, p. 561; and also, but from a different angle, Bartošek, *Les Aveux*, p. 192).
- 100 “Résolution du Comité central,” 22/8/68.
- 101 Letter Garaudy to Rochet, s.d., APCF, “Événements en Tchécoslovaquie,” box 1, folder 5.
- 102 The PCF attempted to demonstrate the continuity of its position. For example, in an interview with *Europe n.1*, Marchais argued that there was no difference

- between the two statements. "R  ponses de Georges Marchais aux questions pos  es par Guy Claisse    *Europe n.1*," *Humanit  *, 24/8/68, p. 2.
- 103 Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 508. Konopnicki, "Prague 68," pp. 38–39. Audio recordings of the CC meetings of 1968 exist; unfortunately, they were not accessible in the PCF archives at the time of my consultations.
- 104 APCF, BP, 13/9/68.
- 105 "Interview de Waldeck Rochet    Radio Luxembourg," *Humanit  *, 27/8/68, p. 2.
- 106 The text, which Kanapa wrote on behalf of Rochet, was addressed to the Soviets in response to their sending of a note justifying the invasion. The text was never sent; it is published in *Kremlin-PCF*, pp.123–129.
- 107 Neither the BP nor Secretariat meetings mention a discussion on either event.
- 108 Andrieu, R., "Eviter le pire," *Humanit  *, 26/8/68, p. 1.
- 109 See, for example, "La Pravda expose les raisons de l'action sovi  tique," *Humanit  *, 23/8/68, p. 2.
- 110 "Un message de dirigeants tch  coslovaques publi      Moscou. Pourquoi nous avons demand   l'aide de l'URSS," *Humanit  *, 22/8/68, p. 2.
- 111 Partial records of the CC meeting of October 1968 on the basis of the notes by Kanapa, can be found in *Kremlin-PCF*, pp. 131–142.
- 112 "Un congr  s extraordinaire du Parti Communiste Tch  coslovaque a r  uni    Prague 1.069 d  l  gu  s," *Humanit  *, 23/8/68, p. 3.
- 113 The PCI's position on the invasion, for example, is published on the first page of *Humanit  * of 22 August.
- 114 *Humanit  * drew an unproblematic picture of a consensus between the CPCS leadership and public opinion, for example in "Les premi  res r  actions en Tch  coslovaquie," *Humanit  *, 28/8, p. 2.
- 115 For example in "D  claration du Bureau Politique du PCF," 25/8/68.
- 116 "Interview Waldeck Rochet    Radio Luxembourg," 26/8/68, APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 12, folder 2.
- 117 In late November the Secretariat noted the weakening of Dub  ek's positions: APCF, Sec, 26/11/68.
- 118 "Communication du BP," 27/8/68, 17hrs. It should be noted, however, that Rochet, in his speech at the *F  te du Havre* of 1 September, still mentioned the sovereignty of the Czechoslovak state and the withdrawal of the troops as pre-conditions for "normalization." "Intervention    la F  te du Havre sur la situation en Tch  coslovaquie," 1/9/68, APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 12, folder 5.
- 119 "D  claration du Bureau politique," 2/9/68. See also a draft (with no major changes) in APCF, BP, 2/9/68.
- 120 For example in the article "Des probl  mes politiques complexes se posent aux dirigeants tch  coslovaques," *Humanit  *, 30/8/68, p. 3.
- 121 See the appendixes and Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, p. 398.
- 122 On the French presidential elections of 1969, see chapter 7. More detail in Lazar, "Affinit  s   lectives," pp. 153–154.
- 123 APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020.0910 and 0918.
- 124 APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020.0913–0915.
- 125 APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020.0919–0923; APCI, Dir, 18/9, 020.0959 (Berlinguer). Also Ingrao might be put in this category, as he proposed a profound debate in the party on democracy and socialism.

- 126 APCI, Dir, 18/9, 020.0965. Furthermore, Cossutta and Colombi did not want the Czechoslovak crisis to lead to further-reaching debates and wished to resume "normality" in the communist world APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020.0915.
- 127 APCI, Dir, 18/9, 020.0960.
- 128 For example Rindone: APCI, CC-CCC 27–29/8/68, 00267.
- 129 APCI, CC-CCC, 27–29/8/68, 264.
- 130 The interventions at the CC and CCC meeting of 27–29/8: APCI, CC-CCC 27–29/ 8/68, 00260–00272. (Pintor at 00268). Luigi Pintor, a former Resistance member, was a CC member and journalist for *Unità*. He was elected to the Chamber in the 1968 elections. He was known for being sympathetic to Maoism and came to play an important role in the criticism of the central leadership.
- 131 Reported by Cossutta, APCI, Dir, 23/8/68, 020.0910. of 1968.
- 132 For example, Boffa recalls that the leadership had difficulties in making the dissent accepted among the rank and file (Boffa, "La crisi cecoslovacca," p. 114).
- 133 Communication by the PSU of 22 August, *Avanti*, 23/8/68. Immediately following the invasion, Napolitano had contact with Lombardi of the PSU, and Ingrao with the PSIUP. APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020.0908.
- 134 For example, *La Nazione* of 22 August referred to the PCI's position as "half solidarity with the murdered and profound fraternity with the murderers." *La Nazione*, 22/8/68, APCI, Est-Cecoslovacchia, "Rassegna stampa," 0552–0844. An article in *Il messaggero*, "The theology of dissent," bitterly criticized the party for not doing more for Czechoslovakia and for West European communism. "Teologia del dissenso," *Il messaggero*, 7/9/68. APCI, Est-Cecoslovacchia, "Rassegna stampa," 0552–0888.
- 135 On 30 August, the parliament groups of the DC, the PSU and the PRI voted a joint motion which condemned the invasion. A number of leading figures of the PSU Left (Lombardi, Achilli, Zappa, Ballardini) did not participate in the vote. "Riaffermata la politica della distensione, per la libert  e la pace nel mondo," *Avanti*, 31/8/68.
- 136 For example in: Antonicelli, F., "Opinioni. La lezione di Praga e i democratici," *Unit *, 5/9/68.
- 137 *Il Popolo*, 9/9/68. According to Lama, an important minority in the PSIUP was in disagreement with its leadership and in agreement with the PCI. APCI, Dir, 23/9, 020.0908–0909.
- 138 Her initial letter of resignation to Rochet was published by *Humanit * on 23 August. Her resignation was discussed and accepted by the CC on 20 October, after Rochet had attempted to persuade her not to resign. Partial records of the CC meeting can be found in *Paris–Prague*, pp. 131–142.
- 139 Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 508.
- 140 On the CC of July in Nanterre, Garaudy disagreed with the hostile attitude vis- -vis the students. Garaudy's speech can be found in Garaudy, *Toute la v rit *.
- 141 *Le Monde*, 28/8/68, p. 1. Immediately following the invasion, he gave an interview with the Czechoslovak (reform-minded) press agency CTK, in which he interpreted the invasion as a sign of the re-Stalinization of the communist world.
- 142 Moreover, Garaudy criticised the PCF leadership for its past policies, including the limited de-Stalinization and the meek protest against the fall of Khrushchev.

- Garaudy to Waldeck Rochet, s.d., in APCF, "  v  nements en T  choslavaquie," box 1 folder 5.
- 143 This was to change at a later stage. The further unravelling of the "Garaudy affair" and the sanctions against other intellectuals from late 1968 onwards will be dealt with in chapter 7.
- 144 The federal committees (96 in total) were the regional organizations of the Central Committee.
- 145 "Aux membres du CC, aux Secr  taires des f  d  rations," 24/8/68, and "Aux directions des f  d  rations, aux membres du CC," 16/10/68, both in APCF, Fund "  v  nements en T  choslavaquie," box 1, folder 6. There were similar meetings in the "Comit  s de Section."
- 146 Vigreux, *Waldeck Rochet*, p. 281. In a party such as the PCF in which discipline was tight and the space for dissent narrow, 20 per cent of the members expressing themselves against the leadership was unseen. According to *Le nouvel observateur* (23/9/68, p. 1), which claimed it had looked into the BP dossier on the federal committee meetings, the picture was the following: 55 per cent of the members agreed with the leadership, 45 per cent disagreed, of which 35 per cent found the dissent too "anti-Soviet" and 10 per cent wished to go further in the dissent.
- 147 See also Verdez-Leroux, *Le r  veil*, p. 214.
- 148 Reported by Denis and Guyot on their discussion with Galluzzi, APCI, Dir, 17/9/68, 020.0989.
- 149 Among these were the Somme (region surrounding Amiens) and Ari  ge (in the Pyrenees, on the Spanish border). There were open disagreements also in the federations of the Seine (region around Paris), Doubs and Belfort (Franche-Comt  ). APCF, Sec, 12/11/68 and 3/12/68.
- 150 See further below.
- 151 See the analysis of polls covering the period 1956 to 1980, in Parodi, Duhamel, "Chronique de l'opinion publique," *Pouvoirs*, pp.159–172. Although such figures for the PCI do not exist, the sharp polemics in the Italian press following the invasion suggest a different situation.
- 152 *Le Monde*, 23/8/68.
- 153 *Le Monde*, 4/10/68.
- 154 Mitterrand resigned as head of the FGDS on 7 November, which marked the start of the disintegration of the FGDS. More detail in Sadoun, "Un processus ferm  ," pp. 175–176.
- 155 Mitterrand's relatively low profile following the invasion is also noted in Gr  mion, *Paris–Prague*, pp. 207–208.
- 156 Laurens, A., "L'attitude du PCF," *Le Monde*, 25–26/8/68.
- 157 Viansson-Ponte, P., "La SFIO invite le PCF a choisir," *Le Monde*, 7/9/68.
- 158 This was a conscious policy: APCF, Sec, 17/9 and 1/10/68.
- 159 Daniel, J., "Faut-il d  fendre l'Union sovi  tique?," LNO, 2/9/68.
- 160 The minimal interest on the far Left in the events in Czechoslovakia following the invasion is also noted in Gr  mion, *Paris–Prague*, p. 193.
- 161 *Lutte ouvri  re*, 23/10/68.

CHAPTER 6.

Normalization and Realignment

*“De Gaulle understands our action
in Czechoslovakia”*

L. Brezhnev, December 1968¹

As an immediate consequence of the invasion and their protest against it, both the PCI and the PCF went through a phase of acute crisis in their relations with the Soviet Union and the world communist movement. During the second half of 1968 and the first half of 1969, the PCI, PCF, and all the West European communist parties were realigned to Soviet dominance and “orthodoxy,” although to varying extents and in differing conditions. The realignment of the PCI and the PCF happened in two ways. Firstly, severe pressure was exerted on both parties, not only by the Soviet Communist Party but also by the East German SED. The PCI and the PCF resumed their relations with the Soviet Communist Party at bilateral meetings at the end of 1968. Secondly, the two parties were partially realigned through a broader process that took place in the world communist movement. In a context of sharply tightening discipline, a new consensus on internationalism was constructed. This happened concretely through the intense preparations for the world conference of communist parties, and the eventual meeting in June 1969 in Moscow. The pressure to comply with “orthodoxy” and discipline exerted on the out-of-government communist parties in this phase has not been perceived in its totality in most of the literature.² At the same time, it will become clear that the West European communist parties played a role, together with Romania and to a lesser extent Yugoslavia, in obstructing the imposition of the harshest forms of discipline. However, the price they paid for maintaining a level of autonomy was to accept the non-discussion of essential issues of strategy and doctrine—which undermined the very reasons for their continued belonging to the Soviet-aligned communist world.

1. INDIVIDUAL REALIGNMENT

In the aftermath of the invasion, the communist parties of the Soviet Union and of the GDR exerted strong and direct pressure on the communist parties of Western Europe. The aim, first and foremost, was to force these parties into adhering to their interpretation of the events in Czechoslovakia and to seek support for the ongoing “normalization” there. Besides this, the aim, especially on the part of the Soviet Union, was to realign the West European communist parties in the context of the theory of limited sovereignty within the world communist movement and to reimpose stricter rules of orthodoxy. The Soviet and East German communist parties used a number of means of pressure, most of which were well-known habits in the communist world. These included bilateral meetings, withdrawal of financial support and material support, attacks on the dissenting parties in the press, support to the internal opposition in these parties against their leaderships by means of sending propaganda material, and attempts to “divide” the West European parties. However, the totality of the pressure that was exerted on the dissenting communist parties in the West from September to December 1968 was exceptional and had not occurred since 1948.

The episode discussed here is illuminating for the different levels of intensity of pressure exerted on the PCI and the PCF, as well as for the different responses by both party leaderships. This should be understood in connection to the position of the central party leaderships in their parties at this stage. As we have seen above, in the case of the PCI the position of dissent was almost perfectly accepted among the wider party cadres (in the *Direzione* and the Central Committee). The PCI leaders dealing with the Soviets—Berlinguer in the first place—felt assured that there was widespread willingness in the party to insist on issues such as autonomy. Berlinguer’s relatively comfortable position is in contrast to the unstable situation in the PCF leadership at the time. It had become clear that the Rochet–Kanapa line of careful dissent was seriously challenged in the leadership, by intellectuals and in the rank and file. The disunity in the party was one factor that jeopardized the bargaining position of the PCF leadership in its dealings with the Soviets.³ More fundamentally, the problem for the PCF was that it was more dependent on the Soviet Union than was the PCI in terms of its domestic sources of legitimation. As we have seen, its

concept of revolution referred more directly to the (historical) world communist movement, and, in contrast to the PCI, anti-fascism did not refer to the domestic situation.

1.1. *The PCI*

1.1.1. *The open conflict with the Soviet and East German parties*

Following the invasion, aggressive press polemics developed between the Italian and Soviet communist parties. In late August, an article by Kirilenko appeared in *Pravda* which, under the header of an “appeal to all true Marxist-Leninists,” called upon communist parties to rally around the Soviet Union.⁴ Communist parties that had condemned the invasion were criticized for falling into the trap of imperialist propaganda. In quintessential divide-and-rule style, the Soviet press started to discriminate between the PCI and the PCF. A *Pravda* article, “Under the banner of internationalism,” published in late October, for example, emphasized the differences between the interpretations by the two parties of the Moscow Protocol and the withdrawal of troops.⁵ Another *Pravda* article by Nekrasov, referring to the dissenting parties, defended the thesis of the “decisive role” of the Soviet Union in the communist world. Fierce protest against these “unacceptable theses” was developed in a *Unità* article by Ferrara.⁶ At the same time, the Polish Communist Party’s paper *Trybuna Ludu* targeted the PCI in the article “Tasks of the communists.” The article not only attacked the PCI for continuing to ask for the withdrawal of troops, but more generally criticized the “Italian road to socialism” and statements on it by Amendola and Longo.⁷

The crisis between the Italian and Soviet communists grew into a stand-off and led to a phase of re-discussion of the very foundations of their relation. Although this was a negotiation between two very unequal partners, the PCI in this phase succeeded in stretching its autonomy inside the world communist movement further than it had ever done before, and further than any out-of-government communist party. When it became clear that the PCI did not intend to shift to the Soviet interpretation of the Czechoslovak crisis, more important issues were put under question and Moscow was ready to initiate difficult debates such as the national roads strategy, party autonomy, and the Soviet position in the communist world. In a conversation between Berlinguer and Zagladin in Budapest in early October, the latter stated that the “peaceful road to socialism” remained exceptional and its acceptance by the world communist movement (that is to say the Soviet Union) not automatic.⁸

While Soviet attacks amplified, the responses by the PCI became increasingly harsh. At the same time there was a consensus in the PCI leadership that some sort of *modus vivendi* with the Soviets needed to be sought. This involved the very delicate issue of the PCI's direct funding by the Soviets. To investigate the possibilities for the resumption of relations between the two parties, and particularly to find out where the funding was at, A. Cossutta was sent to Moscow twice on a secret mission.⁹ During his first visit in mid-September, the Soviets implicitly threatened to withhold funding. Zagladin emphasized that a common understanding of the Czechoslovak events *needed* to be reached; this included support of the Moscow agreements and an end to demands for the withdrawal of troops.¹⁰ As the open attacks did not cease, Cossutta was sent a second time to Moscow in late October. The threats and conditions imposed were even more explicit than before. There was, for example, pressure to adhere to the thesis of "invitation," and the prohibition on critical analyses of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the texts of the PCI's latest CC meeting, which had been closely read in Moscow, were criticized—that is, the contributions by Rossanda, Pintor and Natoli, and what was called the "lack of an adequate response" by the central leadership. Also Amendola was criticized for "confusing communism with social democracy."¹¹ Most unusually, the taboo regarding the funding was broken on this occasion and the Soviets threatened to cease their "support" to the PCI.¹² The Soviets pressured Longo to write a letter to Brezhnev requesting the resuming of financial assistance. As this implied conceding to the Soviet conditions, the Direzione, after discussion, refused to do so.¹³

Furthermore, fierce polemics developed between the SED and the PCI. The SED responded in particular to two *Rinascita* articles by Occhetto and Berlinguer. Occhetto's article of early September discussed the strategy of the communist parties and workers' movements in Western Europe in the context of the crisis of world communism. It suggested a different type of communism and revolution in Western Europe and the non-applicability in the West of the experiences of Eastern Europe.¹⁴ Berlinguer's article of late September, with the provocative title "The contradictions of the socialist societies," argued against a "mythical view" of the situation in the socialist countries. Berlinguer stated not only that the Soviet Union had failed to carry out the promises of the 20th CPSU congress of 1956, but went as far as to criticize the "20th congress line" as such, which was a new element in the PCI's official analysis of the Soviet Union and the communist world.¹⁵

The result was a series of open attacks in the SED press on the PCI, on its strategy, and on its “new internationalism.” At a Central Committee meeting of the SED, H. Axen, responsible for relations with other communist parties, and general secretary E. Honecker, criticized the PCI’s “revisionism.”¹⁶ Subsequently, an anonymous article was published in *Unità*, which deplored these “unacceptable methods” and attacked Honecker for conflating internationalism with loyalty to the Soviet Union.¹⁷

1.1.2. *The Moscow meeting and the PCI’s bluff*

The bilateral meeting between delegations of the Soviet and Italian communist parties on 13–14 November was a crucial moment. Not only were relations between the two parties renegotiated, but also the extent to which the PCI would realign to the “orthodox” Soviet conception of internationalism, in terms of the organization of the communist world, of its conception of socialism, and of strategy vis-à-vis the West.¹⁸ The meeting was a moderate success from the PCI point of view, especially compared to the case of the PCF. It left the party with an enlarged, although still limited, room for maneuver. The method was to use the party’s dissent over the invasion in order to obtain larger party autonomy. Berlinguer played a crucial role in this: probably more sharply than any other PCI leader he intuited that the margins of maneuver could indeed be manipulated in this moment of crisis, as the Soviets needed moral and ideological support from as many communist parties as possible.

The Soviet delegation had prepared a joint communication and the entire discussions were about pressuring the Italians to sign it. However, the latter (Berlinguer, Galluzzi, Bufalini and Colombi), although willing to discuss and to make certain concessions, eventually considered that the concessions would go too far. Instead, a joint communication was published, which only in general terms stated that the meeting had taken place.¹⁹ The Soviets attempted to make the PCI align on the following points in particular:

1. Regarding the Czechoslovak crisis: the PCI needed to admit that there had been a counter-revolution, should cease to ask publicly for the withdrawal of troops, and should publicly support the Moscow Protocol.
2. Regarding relations between the two parties: the public polemics should be stopped and common ground between both parties and in the world communist movement should generally be sought.

3. Regarding the model of socialism: the PCI should state that “general laws” governed the road to socialism. There was pressure to elaborate entirely positive analyses of the socialist regimes and criticism of the PCI’s domestic strategy, for example in terms of the interpretation of democratic centralism and the leading role of the communist party.²⁰
4. With respect to strategy vis-à-vis the West: the Soviet delegation dwelt on the German question and implicitly pressured the PCI to agree on the thesis that no change had occurred in Bonn’s policy towards the East.

The PCI delegation could only agree on the second point and considered the points on the situation in Czechoslovakia in particular to be “a provocation.”²¹ Regarding Czechoslovakia, the Italian communists were willing to refer in general terms to the need for the “re-enforcement of Marxism-Leninism” in the country, provided that there was reference to the Dubček program and sovereignty—which the Soviets could not accept.²² Both delegations were willing to avoid deeper-lying discussions regarding autonomy, socialism and democracy, and so on. This gave proof of both parties’ far-reaching willingness to come to an agreement, and it was largely to the benefit of the PCI, because this situation meant *de facto* autonomy. As a result of this meeting, the Italian communist leaders felt largely reassured that the polemics against them would cease. They also understood that, while Czechoslovakia remained the sensitive point, their margins of maneuver in terms of domestic strategy and conception of socialism remained relatively wide in practice, despite the rhetoric of limited sovereignty.²³ However, one of the basic contradictions of the party’s internationalism became clear at this point: abstaining from any kind of debate on central questions of doctrine and strategy was the only condition on which the party could (and wanted to) remain a part of the world communist movement.

1.2. *The PCF*

1.2.1. *The attacks on the PCF*

Pressure on the French communists by the Soviet and East German communist parties was significantly more aggressive, and interventions more direct, in comparison with the Italian case. At the same time, the PCF was far less assertive in its responses to the “brother parties” than was the PCI. Open attacks on the PCF from the Soviets and East Germans developed in early September and only came to a halt in December. Moreover,

both the CPSU and the SED sent propaganda material (letters, brochures, and so on) to individual members of the PCF. The material not only justified the invasion but also attacked the PCF leadership and questioned the national roads strategy.²⁴ The PCF leadership protested, though only privately, and cancelled all planned visits to the Soviet Union and the socialist countries.²⁵ Waldeck Rochet and Fajon discussed the problem with Zimyanin of the CPSU Central Committee on the occasion of the *Fêtes de l'Humanité* in Paris in mid-September; it was agreed not to engage in public polemics.²⁶

The pressure and public attacks were, nonetheless, intensified. *Pravda* published an article by Kovalev in early September on the French *longuetistes*, in which Lenin was quoted referring to “those who do not understand” as traitors.²⁷ Furthermore, the CPSU press published an article by Duclos from May 1968 that discussed internationalism: brought into the context of the Czechoslovak crisis, this article could be interpreted as suggesting Duclos’ disagreement with the central party line.²⁸ Attempts to undermine the position of the PCF central leadership were intensified, now also by the publication in the CPSU press of letters from PCF members who were in disagreement with the leadership.²⁹ Nor were the PCF intellectuals spared: an article in the Soviet literature review *Literaturnaya Gazeta* heavily attacked Aragon. The French poet coldly replied in *Lettres françaises* that he was and remained supportive of the disagreement with the invasion.³⁰

The PCF leaders protested in private with the Soviets on several occasions,³¹ while avoiding making the conflict public. At a meeting with an SED delegation in Budapest in late September, Marchais suggested that the PCF would publish a response in *Humanité* in the event that the SED failed to stop sending propaganda brochures. Axen agreed to stop the interventions but insisted on a bilateral meeting to “discuss” the Czechoslovak question. It was agreed, furthermore, to avoid touching upon the theme of Czechoslovakia in the public communications between the two parties.³² The leadership was very concerned about keeping the polemics with the Soviet Union hidden from the wider party and other political forces in France.³³ At the same time, however, the PCF leaders were preparing for an aggravation of the polemics. If this were to occur, some of them, primarily Waldeck Rochet and Kanapa, were willing to open a debate on the more fundamental issues such as autonomy, the conception of socialism, and strategy towards the Western world. The Secretariat

meeting of 28 November decided: "If a number of brother parties would render an ideological confrontation on the important current questions of our movement inevitable, we are ready for such a confrontation. Our party would on such an occasion firmly hold its positions."³⁴

Rochet prepared an article, probably to be published in *Humanité* in the event the public attacks became aggravated. The draft text of the article, which was never published, criticized the Soviet Union (but not the GDR) for causing the polemics.³⁵ It repeated the PCF position on the Czechoslovak events, but in a more pronounced and assertive way than the party had ever done since 22 August. For the first time, the theses of "invitation" and of counter-revolution were rejected in unambiguous terms. Also far-reaching was the statement that the invasion went counter to the PCF thesis on the diversity of roads to socialism.³⁶ The above-mentioned note written by Kanapa in September, which was intended to be sent to the Soviets in response to their justification of the invasion, should also be seen in this context. The note listed the disagreements between the PCF and the CPSU on fundamental issues and in clear terms. All this was in line with the careful reinterpretation of internationalism of which Rochet's "diplomatic" campaign of July had also been an expression: it reflected an idealized view of co-operation inside the world communist movement, which, while not entirely ignoring the reality of Soviet dominance, failed to take the full implications of it into account. However, the fact that the Rochet article was never published and the Kanapa letter to the Soviets never sent reflected the wider shift in the party back to full "orthodoxy" and obedience, due to a lack of support in the leadership for a critical position, as well as effective Soviet pressure.

1.2.2. *The Moscow meeting and the PCF's retreat*

As in the case of the PCI, the polemics did not cease before a bilateral meeting with the Soviets. Also here, the significance of this meeting went far beyond the fact of resuming contact and was a moment of renegotiating the parameters of internationalism. In contrast to the PCI case, however, the PCF, at its meeting with Soviets in Moscow in early November, largely complied with Soviet pressure. This was so, firstly, because the PCF leadership was from the outset partly "self-realigned," and secondly because the Soviets imposed tighter conditions on the French than they did on the Italians. The PCF delegation in Moscow, which included Rochet, Duclos, Guyot, Kanapa and Marchais, found itself in a much weaker position than

the PCI delegation had been. Waldeck Rochet's position in the leadership was at this point weak, and his views on internationalism and on how to move on were not even shared by the entire delegation. As we will see in further detail in the next chapter, this phase marked the start of the elimination of Rochet and the rise to power of Marchais. The latter considered complete realignment with the Soviet Union as the precondition for the reconstruction of the unity and identity of the party, and for the further elaboration of its domestic strategy.

The PCF self-censored its initial position in anticipation of the meeting. Its initial position, as laid down at the CC meeting of Ivry, stated that not only the existence of divergences should be mentioned but that also the Soviet's interference in the PCF.³⁷ As to relations between communist parties, the CC report emphasized the fact that divergences between communist parties were possible, without this necessarily leading to a break. With exceptional straightforwardness, the report mentioned that relations inside the world communist movement had deteriorated since the late 1950s, against the PCF's wishes.³⁸ This suggested Chinese but also Soviet responsibility; it was one of the last elements in PCF public statements to hint at the differentiation between Soviet internationalism and the PCF's own line. A further retreat from this initial position took place, as the French delegation to Moscow prepared a joint communication. This stated the existence of divergences between the two parties on Czechoslovakia but dropped the other points.³⁹ In his first intervention at the meeting itself, Waldeck Rochet no longer mentioned the Soviet obligations in connection to the Moscow agreements. He did, however, continue to state that the two parties had had a different analysis of the situation in Czechoslovakia.⁴⁰ Regarding the organization of the world communist movement, Rochet added that the Soviet Union played "a considerable role."⁴¹

The Soviets had also prepared a joint communication. The demands imposed on the French clearly went beyond what had been imposed on the Italians:⁴²

1. Regarding the Czechoslovak crisis: no confirmation of the PCF's position of dissent of 22 August; a positive appreciation of the Moscow agreements and all the following agreements between the Soviet and Czechoslovak parties; not to ask for the withdrawal of troops.
2. Regarding the organization of the communist world: a statement on the "vanguard role" of the Soviet Union in the struggle against imperialism.

3. In terms of global strategy: a very pessimistic view of the “balance of forces” between socialism and imperialism and emphasis on the aggressive tendencies in capitalism; the affirmation that West German foreign policy continued to be expansionist; significantly, a statement on the friendly state relations between the Soviet Union and France.

The central matter of conflict, however, was to do with strategy—that is, the PCF’s domestic strategy and the valuation of Gaullist foreign policy. While the Soviets wanted to push the PCF into at least an implicit agreement with Gaullist foreign policy, the PCF delegation wished to emphasize the links between Gaullist France and West Germany.⁴³ Worse still, in terms of domestic strategy the Soviet delegation criticized the PCF for its strategy in the crisis of May–June.⁴⁴ This was inconsistent with its more or less positive evaluation of this strategy during the events themselves. Also the East German SED now shifted its position regarding PCF strategy in the spring of 1968 to a more negative one. In an internal report, based on the publications of the PCF, it was noted that the PCF had offered a “superficial” analysis of the situation in May–June and had not granted enough attention to non-parliamentary means of action.⁴⁵ This situation was reminiscent of the first Cominform meeting of 1947, at which the PCF and PCI were criticized for their domestic strategy of 1944–1947, which they had carried out in full agreement with the Soviets. In contrast to 1947, however, criticism of West European communist strategy was no longer overt, the public attacks on the Western parties being limited to matters of doctrine rather than domestic strategy. This reflected the unclear nature of the view held by the communist bloc, and the Soviet Union in particular, on what such a strategy in the West should be.

The shifting position of the Soviet and East German communist parties on French domestic strategy demonstrates that this issue was considered entirely in terms of the situation in the communist world, rather than in terms of the situation in France or in terms of East–West relations. This is evidence of the non-relevance of West European communist strategy to the Soviet Union. In the following contacts between the PCF and the Soviet and East German communist parties, this issue, as far as can be known from the currently available archives, was no longer brought up. It thus became clear that “friendly” relations with the Soviet Union and the world communist movement could only be restored, as in the case of the PCI, on the basis of the non-discussion of essential issues. The joint communication, issued

after the November meeting with the Soviet Communist Party, referred neither to the invasion nor to the dissent. The PCF did not succeed in maintaining a note on the “divergences” between the two parties; instead, there was a reference to the “respective points of view” of the two parties.⁴⁶ The final communication did not include any mention of the principle of autonomy, the possibility of disagreement in the world communist movement, or equality in relations between communist parties. Moreover, the “special role” of the Soviet Union was mentioned. The text dwelled largely on global strategy: Vietnam, the Middle East, the system of collective security and Karlovy Vary, and the Non-Proliferation Treaty; it also included a statement on French–Soviet state relations.

The only point that the French had been able to push through was a less pessimistic view of the global “balance of forces,” with more emphasis on the potentials of the global “progressive forces,” the peace forces and the liberation movements.⁴⁷ It reflected the PCF’s understanding that the world communist movement needed to make a more “optimistic” analysis of the global balance of forces, in order for the Soviet Union to shift its strategy on the European continent to a more offensive register. This element was also, however, to be given up by PCF analyses at a later stage. The issue of the joint communication became a matter of controversy within the PCF and in France, even more so when *Pravda* omitted the crucial phrase on “respective points of view” from its publication. A number of the party’s representatives in parliament protested with the leadership. Justifying themselves before the party, the PCF leaders argued, in an obviously meek way, that they had succeeded in avoiding the real danger of an “irreversible rupture” with the Soviets. They also argued that the essentials had been saved: no concessions on the dissent of 22 August, emphasis on the elements of convergence, and avoidance of continued polemics.⁴⁸ In the party rank and file, for example in the Paris federations, there was also disappointment and open criticism.⁴⁹

1.3. *The question of the West European communist conference*

A direct result of the pressure put on the Western communist parties was the failure of the latter to bring about a regional conference of the West European communist parties immediately following the invasion. A number of joint actions of the dissenting parties of Europe were suggested, some of which involved Romania and Yugoslavia. In all these plans the PCI and PCF were the crucial actors. All these attempts broke down, due part-

ly to strong Soviet pressure against initiatives, which it considered as factional. The episode demonstrated the limited potential of polycentrism: groupings of communist parties in the world communist movement were only allowed insofar as they did not go counter to Soviet interests as a hegemon; ultimately, also the PCI succumbed to this.⁵⁰

On their way back from Moscow to Rome on 21 August, Longo and Pajetta met with Rochet in Paris. Although it was clear that the positions of the leaders of both parties largely converged,⁵¹ there was an agreement not to carry out an explicitly concerted action (as, for example, a common statement of dissent), at least for the time being. A short statement only communicated that the meeting had taken place.⁵² According to Longo, it was the French who dismissed a common initiative. But he himself also declared to the Direzione that "the moment for a common initiative has not occurred."⁵³ Although the dissent of the two parties came about separately, it was for both very important to know that they did not have an isolated position in the world communist movement.⁵⁴ The invasion and the events immediately following it strongly intensified the contacts between the West European communist parties. Intense communication between West European communist leaders took place at the height of the crisis.⁵⁵ The day following the invasion, the Austrian KP  , which was rapidly radicalizing in terms of autonomy, unofficially proposed convening a conference of the "dissenting" West European communist parties, which would, at the least, issue a joint statement on the current situation.⁵⁶ The project caused great alarm in Moscow and East Berlin, as it suggested the secession of the West European parties. *Neues Deutschlands*, the organ of the SED, promptly published an article criticizing the KP   and its general secretary E. Fischer for revisionism and strongly condemning the initiative.⁵⁷

The PCI showed an interest in the project, but its commitment to it turned out to be limited. The PCI leadership anticipated that, in the highly confrontational atmosphere in the world communist movement at that moment, regional action would be interpreted as factional by the Soviets and might cause a rupture. This had never been the aim behind the PCI's conceptions of regional communism. The PCI leadership shifted between two positions. A "minimalist" position demonstrated its interest in the project as a bargaining tool inside the WCM and an implicit threat vis-  -vis the Soviets. A "maximalist" position, held at this point especially by Galluzzi and Berlinguer, more genuinely conceived the regional conference as a way

to cause change in the world communist movement.⁵⁸ Longo's report to the CC of 27 August mentioned the existence of various proposals for broad multilateral meetings, "especially among the communist parties of capitalist Europe." Importantly, he added that the goal of such meetings should be not only the exchange of ideas but also the co-ordination of strategy in favor of détente and international co-operation.⁵⁹

The PCF, always wary of polycentrism and preferring to operate in the wider WCM context, showed little sympathy for the project. However, part of the leadership initially held a position similar to the "minimalist" one in the PCI.⁶⁰ This was the reason why, in a radio interview, Fajon announced that common initiatives between the West European communist parties were envisaged.⁶¹ However, in early September the PCF leadership pronounced itself against the proposal. This was the consequence of direct Soviet pressure on this issue, but also of the fact that the party did not consider the issue of West European communist regionalism worthy of a conflict. On 31 August the French communist leaders received a letter from Moscow, informing them that they had heard about preparations for a separate West European conference. It was made clear that this was out of the question.⁶² Although the PCF did not adhere to the proposal, in early September the KPÖ press published a list of parties supporting the idea, among which figured the PCF and the PCI.⁶³

The Soviets put pressure on the Italians as well, especially on the occasion of Cossutta's trip to Moscow in mid-September.⁶⁴ By mid-September the Italian communists gave up their support for the regional conference, despite the pressure exerted on them by some of the reformist Czechoslovak leaders to go through with it.⁶⁵ While the Austrian party continued to toy with the idea for a while, this was the end of it. The separate conference of West European parties, with all the implications it might have had in terms of diversification inside the communist world, did not only fail because the Soviets were opposed to it. While the PCF continued to be profoundly opposed to any conception of the communist world which was not a centralist one, the PCI was not willing fully to engage in such a radical initiative if the French were not involved. It was not willing to risk Soviet sanctions for the benefits that a West European communist grouping *outside* the world communist movement might have. These were certainly limited in terms of strategy as well as doctrine from the PCI perspective. The PCI's unwillingness to consider the West European communist grouping as anything more than a pressure group inside the world communist move-

ment was to remain a constant feature of the PCI's regional internationalism into the 1970s.

The position of the PCI and PCF on the invasion to some extent converged with those taken by Romania and Yugoslavia. Here too, however, the attitudes of the PCF and the PCI were characterized by a careful anticipation of Soviet reactions. The Yugoslavs requested the PCI to undertake a common initiative—to which the latter, despite several meetings, did not respond.⁶⁶ Romania meanwhile officially proposed organizing a pan-European conference of communist parties on the Czechoslovak crisis. Longo consulted Rochet on the matter, and both concluded that it was “not a priority.”⁶⁷ Enthusiasm for this project among the PCI leaders was lukewarm; this was reflected in the party's statement, which read that the party “adhered in principle.” The PCF was also reluctant and rejected the idea in a private letter to Ceaușescu.⁶⁸ The reluctance with which the PCI responded to these initiatives might seem surprising. Its position should be understood in the light of its usual caution in anticipation of negative Soviet responses and reprisals, particularly in the context of open and severe conflict between Moscow and it. In spite of its theoretical adherence to polycentric models for the communist world, the PCI did not consider it worth risking “excommunication” or a total rupture with Moscow for a probably shaky alliance with parties with which it did not share a firm ideological and strategic common basis. This was at the heart of the contradictions of the PCI's internationalism after 1968.

2. THE REALIGNMENT OF THE COMMUNIST WORLD AFTER CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The (partial) individual realignment of the PCI and the PCF took place in a context of realignment in the Soviet-dominated communist world throughout late 1968 and 1969. This occurred at different levels: inside the communist regimes, in the relations between them, and in the wider movement. Of particular importance to the out-of-government communist parties was the holding of the Moscow Conference in June 1969 and the intense preparations that preceded it. Although this was predominantly a matter of discipline being tightened, the West European communist parties, in co-ordination with Romania, succeeded in cutting off the sharp edges of the realignment. They did so in two ways: firstly, immediately fol-

lowing the invasion, by obtaining the postponement of the conference which was planned for September; and secondly, by obstructing various plans for the organization of a “permanent organ” of world communist parties, in the tradition of the Comintern and Cominform.⁶⁹

2.1. *The realignment of the communist world*

In the Soviet Communist Party leadership, the invasion of Czechoslovakia led the conservatives to gain renewed influence. A struggle between opponents and advocates of change had been ongoing throughout the 1960s, the debate crystallizing around the question of Stalin. In early 1969, the Stalinists launched the question of the rehabilitation of Stalin in the context of the 90th anniversary of the birth of Stalin, planned for late 1969. While signs of an official rehabilitation multiplied in the course of 1969, by the end of the year the progressives were able to obstruct the attempts at official rehabilitation. The argument that the West European communist parties and Yugoslavia would never have accepted this seemed to have influenced the debates in Moscow.⁷⁰

In terms of relations between socialist states, Soviet dominance was generally greater after 1969 than it was in 1960–1968, but it was smaller than it had been before 1956.⁷¹ In the short term, the centrifugal tendencies came to a halt. A situation came about in which the Soviet Union was once more the undisputed leader of the communist world, albeit a leader that to some extent shared power and responsibilities with other states. The Soviets enforced discipline through further political, military and economic integration. There was the appearance of a degree of multilateral decision making. To this end, the Soviet Union signed a series of agreements of co-operation and friendship, with Czechoslovakia in 1970 and with East Germany in 1975.⁷² While relations with Yugoslavia and Romania sharply worsened immediately following the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the former seemed keen on establishing friendly relations with the Soviets in the early 1970s; and the latter, while developing a nationally based military strategy, no longer obstructed WTO decision making on fundamental issues. Economic integration was enhanced in the framework of the CMEA, and military integration through a reform of the WTO, decided in March 1969 in Budapest. The latter reform, while it did address East European concerns regarding burden sharing, solidified Soviet dominance. As a result of the Czechoslovak crisis, the resistance that had emerged in the CMEA and WTO against these “integrative” reforms between 1965 and 1968 was now significantly smaller.⁷³

The Brezhnev Doctrine marked an end to some of the ambiguity that had existed throughout the 1960s regarding the acceptable variations in socialist regimes. With the exceptions of Yugoslavia and to some extent Romania, all the East European socialist regimes accepted these limits. Overt challenges to the Soviet model for socialism posed by a national communist party did not occur after 1968. This went hand in hand with the re-imposition of “general laws” of socialism. Central here was the maintaining of the “leading role of the communist party”: any form of political pluralism was unacceptable. However, on this common basis national variations remained possible. This became clear from the case of Hungary, which, despite Soviet pressures in 1969, was able to continue its line of “new economic policy” throughout the 1970s and 1980.⁷⁴ Furthermore, the Soviet response to the events in Poland in late 1970 was also telling of this ambivalence. Workers’ riots broke out in Gdańsk, with demands for wage increases and fair consumer goods prices. The Soviet Union put pressure on the Polish communist leadership and withheld support for party leader Gomułka. While it abstained from openly interfering, the threat of a Soviet invasion was always present.⁷⁵ The Polish crisis, though not leading to yet another major crisis in the communist world, did demonstrate once more the gravity of the domestic problems of the European socialist regimes.

In the aftermath of the Czechoslovak crisis, a major border conflict broke out between China and the Soviet Union. Although tensions on the Ussuri river border between the two powers had occurred earlier, the conflict of March 1969 was a consequence of the Czechoslovak crisis in two ways. After the enunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine, China felt threatened, feared a Soviet nuclear attack or a pre-emptive strike, and re-enforced its military presence at its borders with the Soviet Union. The revival of the Sino-Soviet conflict broke with the relatively “tolerant” approach of the Soviet leadership vis-à-vis China of the years 1966 to 1968. For Moscow, which seems not to have sought the military clashes of the spring of 1969, its harsh response was part of the realignment of the communist world and was a demonstration of its political, strategic and military dominance over it. As the invasion of Czechoslovakia had caused disunity in the communist bloc, and especially the communist world, a renewed anti-Chinese campaign, in military as well as propagandistic and ideological terms, was expected to enhance “unity.” Hostilities continued up to the summer of 1969. Although the Soviets re-enforced their military presence in the East, this did not involve nuclear weapons and diplomatic

contacts were soon resumed. Moscow was especially worried that an escalation of the conflict would draw China even closer to the United States.⁷⁶

2.2. *The “permanent agency”*

It was obvious that, apart from other motives the Soviet leaders had, the intensification of Sino–Soviet tension served to pressure its allies into strict discipline and “normalization.” In these circumstances, the conference of communist parties of the world, planned before the Czechoslovak crisis and scheduled for late 1968, took on a new meaning. In early September, after having received the invitation for a preparatory meeting scheduled for late September in Budapest, the PCF sent a letter to the Hungarian communists in which it proposed the postponement of the preparations and of the conference itself. The PCF, it said, although in principle still supportive of the world communist conference, did not consider the circumstances suitable for convening it in the near future.⁷⁷ Kanapa and his collaborator, L. Feix, seem to have exercised a decisive influence on Rochet in this decision.

Once more, the PCF’s intention was not to obstruct the conference or collaboration in the communist world, but to gain time. The party’s motives were a mix of (contradictory) motives, very similar to its position with regard to the world communist conference in 1965.⁷⁸ Firstly, the PCF, like the PCI and most of the “dissenting” parties, feared that a conference in the given circumstances would turn into a public trial against them. The conference seemed to initiate a new phase of ideological rigidity which would completely mark the end of party autonomy.⁷⁹ All the “dissenting” parties shared the fear that the international conference might turn into a forum for reaffirming the “leading role” of the Soviet Union over the movement.⁸⁰ Secondly, the PCF feared that a plenary conference would bring the many disagreements to the surface and make clear to the capitalist world how serious the crisis was. It also feared that parties which were more critical of the Soviet Union than it was itself, such as the Yugoslavs, the Romanians and the PCI, would either not attend, or if they did would be given a forum for expressing far-reaching dissent. In a note to Rochet of early September, Feix stated that the main problem was that “all parties should attend.”⁸¹

The PCI leadership also favored the postponement of the conference preparations, but, once again, kept a lower profile than the PCF did.⁸² The PCI leadership did not send a similar letter, despite French pressure and despite the fact that the Spanish Communist Party also did.⁸³ However,

Berlinguer seems to have been ready, should the postponement not be accepted at the Budapest meeting, to initiate a general debate on the motives behind the dissent, the events in Czechoslovakia, the letter of invitation, the presence of the troops, and some of the ideological divergences that lay behind the Czechoslovak crisis.⁸⁴ In a press communication Berlinguer announced his party's agreement with the postponement, arguing that "the situation in the entire movement is not good nor normal [...]. More divergences have come to the fore."⁸⁵ The PCI now linked the question of the conference to, firstly, the withdrawal of troops and restoration of Czechoslovak sovereignty; and secondly, the debate on modes of interaction between communist parties.⁸⁶

There was a convergence of the dissenting European communist parties in view of the Budapest meeting in late September, of which the PCF now took the lead.⁸⁷ The British, Finnish, Swiss, Austrian, Swedish and Norwegian parties publicly adhered to the postponement.⁸⁸ At the preparatory meeting of September in Budapest the atmosphere was grim; the West European communist parties felt that they were being isolated and got the impression that the Soviets wished to make the conference adopt a statement of *post factum* support for the invasion of Czechoslovakia.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the conference was postponed to an unspecified date, and the next preparatory meeting was to take place in November. As the Soviets, East Germans and Hungarians opposed the postponement, this was a victory for the dissenting parties.⁹⁰ However, the price that the PCF, PCI and PCE had to pay for this was their agreement not to mention Czechoslovakia throughout the conference preparations.⁹¹

Resistance to the holding of the conference dissipated as the realignment went ahead. In October–November the PCI crucially shifted towards the acceptance of the greater part of the Soviet conditions surrounding the conference preparations, although it maintained a core of its own conditions. The Direzione accepted the proposal set out by the Soviets at their meeting with Cossutta in late October, to hold the conference in April–May.⁹² This was the direct result of the meeting between the PCI and the Soviets in November. At this meeting, the Soviets proposed the following: the basis of these texts would be the ones drafted earlier by the Hungarians (which the PCI had opposed since early 1968);⁹³ the drafting of the texts would be done by a restricted commission of eight parties (i.e. the "old way"); and from March onwards all parties which wished to do so could join this commission.⁹⁴ Crucially, Berlinguer advised the Direzione

to accept this proposal.⁹⁵ His shift was complete with respect to early October, when he had still argued for fundamentally changing the drafted texts and had considered that “all fundamental issues are still open.”⁹⁶ The PCF, after the November meeting with the Soviets, also came to accept the conference date proposed by the Soviets and the current draft texts.⁹⁷ The postponement of the world conference, in retrospect, was largely to the advantage of those parties favoring cohesion, such as the Soviets and the East Germans. These parties, once they had understood how chaotic the situation in the WCM was, tended to favor the postponement.⁹⁸

At this point, however, a far more important matter came up, namely, the organization of a new “permanent agency” inside the world communist movement, in the tradition of the Comintern and the Cominform.⁹⁹ The PCF, the PCI and the other dissenting parties, including Romania, strongly opposed this.¹⁰⁰ The first proposal for a permanent organization was a Hungarian one; it was camouflaged as a commission that would draft a text on the occasion of the one-hundredth anniversary of Lenin’s birth. Although the dissenting parties certainly did not oppose such a commemoration, they realized that it would, through the initiation of a heavy ideological “debate” on Leninism, tighten doctrinal control over them. The PCF delegation reported that “several brother parties, in particular the five socialist countries, desire such a discussion [...] and we could say, an ideological fight,” and that “the socialist countries have not given up on the idea of a conference which decides upon all ideological issues.” The PCF “saved” the situation by proposing a compromise: a text for the commemoration would be drafted at the next plenary session in Budapest in March. Secondly, the Communist Party of the United States proposed organizing an “International Information Agency for Communist Parties.” Like the first proposal, it was really instigated by the Soviet Union and was reminiscent of the founding of the Cominform, which was initially also presented as a mere information bureau. According to the French delegation, the project was already at a rather advanced stage and financial means had already been authorized. This was also rejected because of the fierce opposition of nearly all of the West European communist parties, the Romanian, Australian, and some of the Latin American parties.¹⁰¹

2.3. *The Moscow Conference*

The conference eventually took place in Moscow between 5 and 17 June 1969. It has been described in the literature, with special reference to the

position of the West European communist parties, as “the institutionalization of diversity” in the world communist movement.¹⁰² In reality, however, the conference largely meant a return to a higher degree of discipline with respect to the preceding period. To be sure, the conference brought to the surface some of the divisions existing in the world communist movement. Not only did Yugoslavia and the Dutch Communist Party refuse to attend the conference, the meetings demonstrated how individual parties, if they wished to, could express their opinions, including critical ones of Soviet policy, more openly than beforehand. What was institutionalized at the Moscow meeting was the possibility for individual communist parties unilaterally to disagree with some elements of the common doctrine. This, however, was not exactly diversity: as the failed attempts of the PCI will demonstrate, no encompassing alternative views on internationalism were accepted at the meeting. Rather, they demonstrated the fact that “unity,” discipline and Soviet dominance were restored without this being underpinned by a commonly accepted concept of strategy or ideology.

As the West European communist parties were partly or largely realigned through their bilateral contacts with the Soviets, the pressure group which had brought about the postponement of the conference as well as the obstruction of the plans for a permanent structure fell apart. This became clear at the preparatory meetings held in Budapest and Moscow between February and May.¹⁰³ According to the Italians, four groups of parties could at this point be distinguished:¹⁰⁴

- the PCI, supported by the Swiss, Belgian, Swedish, British and Australian parties. They demanded far-reaching changes of the draft texts, which dated from before the invasion;
- the Finnish, Spanish and Romanian parties, which were willing to accept the texts as a further basis for discussion;
- the Soviet, French, and East German communist parties and their “loyal” allies, which were willing to re-discuss the text in a limited way but were not willing to change it on key points;
- the Polish, which pressured for a confrontational debate and anti-revisionist attacks.

The PCF turned into the staunchest defender of the draft texts and played an important role in clearing the ground for unanimity. In line with its *fille ainée* role, but also in an attempt to “normalize” polycentrism, it

undertook a campaign among the West European communist parties to make them accept the terms as well as the texts of the conference. In April–May 1969, a PCF delegation met unofficially with leaders of the Spanish, British, Belgian, Swiss and Italian communist parties. As the French communists in that period also held an unofficial meeting in Paris with a Soviet delegation, the former meetings were most probably organized at least in agreement with the Soviet Communist Party.¹⁰⁵ During the preparations, many of the conflicts between the autonomist parties such as the Italian and the Romanian ones, and the “conservative” parties such as the Polish and East German ones, were in fact resolved by a French compromise proposal. Regarding the conference procedures, for example, the Italian proposal to make all meetings public met with fierce opposition, and the French compromise that the conference organizers hold a press conference at the end of each day was accepted.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, the French communists fell back into the old tactics of parallel discussions and pre-meeting agreements. For example, they agreed with the East Germans that they would support the draft texts on social democracy, which presented a very negative analysis of it and decided upon the need for the European communist world to take on a defensive attitude towards it. The PCF gave its support here most probably in return for a definite abandonment of the “permanent agency” plan.¹⁰⁷

On the other hand, the PCF maintained a strong stance on party autonomy and non-interference. It played a determining role in the definite rejection of the “press agency” proposal. Furthermore, it played an active role in the drafting of a text for the commemoration of Lenin’s birth with the aim to turn it into a ceremonial document rather than an ideological one.¹⁰⁸ This last point can be regarded as illustrative of the PCF’s relation to the communist world, which increasingly shifted towards one based on the sense of sharing a common *past* and the continuous reproduction of a number of common memories, foremost the 1917 revolution. The PCF did not wish to avoid discussions of doctrine as a matter of principle, but rather for tactical reasons. Its attitude was similar to the one it had held around 1965 regarding the calling of the world communist conference: given the chaotic situation in the movement, the PCF considered engaging in doctrinal discussions as damaging to “unity” rather than enhancing it.

The PCI, by contrast, fiercely criticized the draft texts and proposed a vast number of amendments, very often as a matter of principle. Only a handful of these were accepted. In the “Commission of Eight Parties,” the

PCI was supported only by the small Belgian Communist Party. Both parties complained that the texts were too vague, reflected the atmosphere of "false unity" in the world communist movement, and lacked clarity on the strategy of peaceful coexistence and the struggle for peace. Significantly, both parties argued that the struggle for socialism needed a "synchronization" of the strategies of the East and West European communist parties. By this they meant that the ruling communist parties in Eastern Europe needed to take into account the (domestic) interests of the West European communist parties.¹⁰⁹ As to the final resolutions, the only significant amendment which the PCI and the autonomist parties could enforce was the omission of a reference to the Soviet Union as "leading centre" of the communist world.¹¹⁰

Of central importance to the Italians was their proposition of the *allargamento*, or the invitation of non-communist groups to the conference and future occasions. It became a central point of debate, but was supported only by the PCE and some of the smaller West European parties. It was rejected, due to fierce opposition from those parties which emphasized doctrinal "orthodoxy": the Soviet, East German and Polish parties, and most vehemently also the PCF.¹¹¹ This demonstrated the extent to which the PCF had realigned itself over the past year, as at least until spring 1968 it had been willing to compromise on the issue.¹¹² It also demonstrated its incapability of conceiving of the world communist movement as anything radically different from what it was or had been historically. The non-acceptance of the *allargamento* was a major defeat for the PCI, as it had been presented as a central pillar of its new internationalist line on the occasion of the 12th National Congress of February 1969.¹¹³ In a wider context, it signified the non-acceptance of true diversity in the world communist movement and the sharp demarcation of old boundaries—in terms of organization, identity, doctrine and strategy.

The fact that most of its proposals were not accepted led the Italian delegation to sign only one of the four sections of the conference resolutions, namely the one regarding the "anti-imperialist struggle" and global strategy. Disagreement at this point was more pronounced than it had ever been before at a world communist meeting. While the Swedes, British and Norwegians did not subscribe to the final text as a whole, the Spanish voiced reservations regarding some parts of the final resolutions. The decision of the PCI delegation was not an *ad hoc* one and its genesis can be traced back to early 1969. The issue had been thoroughly discussed in the Direzione,

and the Central Committee of May 1969 authorized the delegation to the conference not to sign the three problematic sections if considered necessary.¹¹⁴ However, it was also the result of a failed agreement with the Soviets. When, during the conference itself, it became clear to the Italian delegation that no significant changes would be made to the texts, Berlinguer, in a series of private meetings before the final session, came to an agreement with Brezhnev. The PCI would sign the whole final document, but would be allowed to issue a special declaration with criticism of the text as a whole. In return, the PCI would not refer to the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Czechoslovakia. Berlinguer was willing to settle for this, but as the Soviets pretended at the final meeting that there was no such agreement between them, the Italians no longer felt compelled to stick to it either.¹¹⁵ This episode demonstrates, on the one hand, the extent to which the PCI was willing to compromise, and on the other hand the unwillingness of parties such as the Soviet one to allow real diversification.

The PCI leadership was largely satisfied with the outcome of the conference, despite the non-acceptance of some of the pillars of its definition of internationalism. However, at this point Berlinguer did express serious worries regarding the enormous difficulties which the party was likely to encounter in making its conception of internationalism acceptable and in changing the internationalism of the world communist movement.¹¹⁶ What the PCI leaders had learnt from the conference, first and foremost, was a greater awareness of the limits of flexibility, which existed inside the boundaries set by official WCM doctrine. This was a matter of perception as much as of reality, and it led them unilaterally to claim autonomy. While, during the post-invasion debate, many Direzione members had still felt and expressed the fear of excommunication and isolation, this fear had now genuinely diminished. Ingrao made a straightforward comment on this at a Direzione meeting, but his feeling was without doubt shared by many of his colleagues, including Berlinguer, Galluzzi and Napolitano: "I do not wish to believe that our disagreement [with the conference resolutions] will lead to a break or an excommunication. This is what I think to have learned from Czechoslovakia."¹¹⁷

There was, however, a mirror development to this, which seriously infringed upon the PCI's capabilities to enforce real change in the world communist movement. The fact that the PCI, despite its many fundamental disagreements with the protagonists of the world communist movement, did attend the conference, and the fact that it did not turn away from the WCM

after August 1968 but instead affirmed its adherence to it at the 12th Congress, had not gone unnoticed in the East European capitals. “Orthodox” communist parties such as the East German one understood from the realignment of the PCI—however partial—that the latter party was not likely to ever break with the communist world and that, ultimately, it would be willing to go far in accepting the existing situation.¹¹⁸

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The protests against the invasion expressed by the PCI and PCF provoked a profound crisis in their relations with the communist world and the Soviet Union. Both parties were systematically and openly attacked by the Soviet, East German and Polish communist parties. The discussions which both party leaderships held with the Soviet leaders at the end of 1968 were of longer-term significance: in this phase, the limits inside which the internationalism of the two parties could develop were defined. This marked the start of a divergence in the evolution of the two parties. It was the combined result of, on the one hand, the different attitudes of the leaderships themselves, and on the other hand different attitudes displayed by the Soviet leaders towards them. In both the PCI and PCF cases, it became clear that the central condition on which both parties could remain part of the world communist movement was that fundamental issues of doctrine and strategy would henceforth not be discussed. In the case of the PCI, this meant the non-discussing of such important questions as the “Italian road,” pluralism and democracy, European détente, and so on. In the case of the PCF, this implied the non-discussing of domestic and European strategy, and such fundamental issues as Gaullist foreign policy and PCF strategy in the May–June ’68 events. The fact that both the Soviet and East German leaderships now criticized the PCF for this strategy, while at the time they had endorsed it, clearly demonstrated the secondary importance accorded by these parties to communist strategy in the West.

The limits to autonomy imposed by the Soviets and the formal and informal structures of the world communist movement, but also self-imposed by the West European communist parties, became sharply delineated as the project for a separate West European communist conference failed. While the PCF did not welcome a regionalist initiative, neither was the PCI willing to go to any lengths to defend the project, as, in the given

context, it would be openly antagonistic to the Soviet Union. The type of common action which came about among the West European communist parties was directed not at creating alternatives to the world communist movement, but rather at obstructing some of the furthest-reaching implications of the ongoing process of realignment. Together with Romania, the PCI and PCF succeeded in jeopardizing the plans for the organization of a permanent structure of world communism. Furthermore, the West European parties, led by the PCF, succeeded in postponing the planned world communist conference. However, while this was initially felt as a victory, the postponement permitted the Soviet Union and its allies to organize the meeting after most of the communist parties—the PCF in the first place—had been realigned individually.

By June 1969, the PCI was one of the few parties still advocating a different kind of internationalism, in organizational, doctrinal and strategic terms. However, one of the central elements of its alternative view on internationalism—the *allargamento*—was not accepted. By signing only one of the three sections of the conference resolutions (“the anti-imperialist struggle”), the PCI seemed to suggest that it was critically narrowing down its internationalism to the strategic dimension, and gave proof of the expansion of its autonomy in the world communist movement. However, this made the PCI into an exception rather than significantly influencing the overall situation. Moreover, the Czechoslovak crisis had made it clear that the party, ultimately, was willing to go far in accepting the existing situation in the world communist movement.

NOTES

- 1 Report Marchais to the CC of December 1968, APCF, “Événements en Tchécoslovaquie,” box 2, folder 2.
- 2 This is the case, for example, in Höbel, “Il PCI, il '68 cecoslovacco.”
- 3 The rise to power of Berlinguer in the PCI and the ousting of Rochet in the PCF are discussed in the next chapter.
- 4 A. P. Kirilenko was a member of the Soviet Presidium, responsible for international affairs.
- 5 A French translation of the article in “Sous le drapeau d'internationalisme,” APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 13, folder 1.
- 6 Ferrara, “Tesi inaccettabili,” *Unità*, 8/9/68.
- 7 An Italian translation of the article of 8/9/68: “Doveri dei comunisti,” *APCI, Dir.*, 020.0996–0998. A discussion of the CPSU–PCI press polemics can also be

- found in "Article Trybuna Ludu: Le devoir des communistes," APCF, "Ev  nements en T  chocoloslovaquie," box 2 folder 4.
- 8 Zagladin also threatened to increase the press attacks and to instrumentalize divisions inside the PCI. Oral report Berlinguer to the Direzione, APCI, Dir, 4/10/68, 020.1073.
 - 9 The issue of the funding was usually taboo between the PCI leaders and in the wider party; in this period the PCI leaders did mention it, referring to it as "the practical things" (*le cose pratiche*).
 - 10 Written report Cossutta to the Direzione: APCI, Dir, 12/9/68 (annex to meeting of 18/9), 020.0976–0981. Zagladin concluded that "Czechoslovakia will become less and less important and the comrades will understand this." The crisis over Soviet funding in the PCI after the invasion is also discussed on the basis of Soviet sources in Riva, *Oro da Mosca*, pp. 367–369. Riva however does not mention Cossutta's first trip.
 - 11 Oral report Cossutta to the Direzione, APCI, Dir, 31/10/68, 1104.
 - 12 Ponomarev on this occasion listed the Soviet motives behind financial support to the PCI as follows: firstly, the PCI was constructing socialism; secondly, it strove for peace; and thirdly, it helped building towards unity in the WCM. Oral report Cossutta to the Direzione, APCI, Dir, 31/10/68, 1102–1106.
 - 13 In December, Ponomarev promised Cossutta \$ 3,700,000 for 1969, a cut of almost 50 per cent. This was indeed what the PCI received, though only in the second half of 1969. From 1972 onwards, funding was increased to \$ 6,200,000. Riva, *Oro da Mosca*, pp. 374–381.
 - 14 Occhetto, A., "A proposito dei fatti Cecoslovacchi: Forze rivoluzionarie e lotta per il socialismo nell'Europa capitalista," *Rinascita*, 6/9/68.
 - 15 Berlinguer, E., "Le contraddizioni delle societa' socialiste," *Rinascita*, 27/9/68.
 - 16 Kurt Hager, ideologist of the SED, wrote in a *Neues Deutschlands* article of October 1968 that the PCI was "a convergence of left and right revisionism." "Paesi socialisti" and "Art. Einheit," APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 41.8.
 - 17 *Unit  *, 1/11/68.
 - 18 Sources for the meeting are: Oral report Berlinuger to Direzione: APCI, Dir, 16/11/68, 020.1162–1167; and "Incontri PCI-PCUS, svolgimento, seduta 13/11," m.s., APCI, Berlinguer, 59.2.
 - 19 *Unit  *, 15/1/68, p. 3.
 - 20 Kirilenko stated that the PCI as a whole did not (yet) suffer from "reformist-nationalist deviations" as did, in his view, the Swedish and Austrian. APCI, Dir, 16/11/68, 020.1163.
 - 21 The PCI delegation had also prepared a communication; it included statements on party autonomy, the *allargamento*, co-operation between communist parties and peace forces; it referred to the system of collective security in Europe, Karlov Vary, and non-proliferation. "Nostro comunicato iniziale," APCI, Berlinguer, 59.4. At the meeting with the Soviets Colombi emphasised different points than the other members, referring to the PCI's "prestige" and its ability to exert pressure on the Czechoslovaks. "Incontri PCI-PCUS, svoglimento," APCI, Berlinguer, 59.2.
 - 22 APCI, Dir, 16/11/68, 020.1165.
 - 23 This was especially Berlinguer's interpretation of the situation, but he was cru-

- cially supported by Galluzzi, Amendola and Napolitano. There were Direzione members (Terracini, Natta, Ingrao) who wished to affirm the disagreement with the Soviets more strongly, for example by publishing a separate statement on the meeting and on the situation in Czechoslovakia. On the other hand, Colombi argued for no longer demanding the withdrawal of the troops. The discussion of Berlinguer's report can be found in APCI, Dir, 16/11/68.
- 24 At least six different brochures were diffused among PCF militants by the SED. APCF, BP, 23/9/68. However, at a meeting with Galluzzi, 17/9, on the *Fêtes de l'Humanité*, Guyot and Denis spoke of a massive amount of material. "Incontro del compagno Galluzzi con i compagni Guyot e Denis 17/9/68," APCI, Dir, 020. 0987.
 - 25 APCF, BP, 13/9/68; "Quelques questions concernant nos relations avec le PCUS," 3/11/68, s.n., APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 13, folder 1; APCF, BP, 13/9/68; also discussed by the PCI in APCI, Dir, 18/9/68, 020.0954.
 - 26 "Communication verbale au CC PCUS, transmise oralement par Plissonnier," 17/7/68, APCF, Fund "Événements en Tchécoslovaquie," box 2, folder 3.
 - 27 "Notes de Kanapa à Waldeck Rochet à propos d'un article paru dans la *Pravda*," APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 13, folder 1; and "Communication verbale au CC PCUS, transmise oralement par Plissonnier," 17/7/68, APCF, Fund "Événements en Tchécoslovaquie," box 2, folder 3.
 - 28 APCF, BP, 13/9/68.
 - 29 For example, *Nouvelles de Moscou* on 14/9 published a letter by party member Charles Frechard in disagreement with the dissent over the invasion. "Communication verbale au CC PCUS, transmise oralement par Plissonnier," 17/7/68, APCF, Fund "Événements en Tchécoslovaquie," box 2, folder 3.
 - 30 "Une réponse de Louis Aragon à la Literaturnaia Gazeta," s.n., s.d., APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 12, folder 5.
 - 31 The CPSU responded that it was *Humanité* which had provoked the polemics by criticizing the Soviet Union. "Communication verbale au CC PCUS, transmise oralement par Plissonnier," 17/7/68, APCF, Fund "Événements en Tchécoslovaquie," box 2, folder 3; and "Communication du CC du PCUS au PCF," 26/9/68, APCF, Fund "Événements en Tchécoslovaquie," box 2, folder 3.
 - 32 At the Budapest meeting Axen criticized the positions of Garaudy and Aragon. In his reply Marchais differentiated between Garaudy and *Lettres françaises*. "Conversation entre la délégation du PCF et la délégation du SED à Budapest 29/9/68," APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 13, folder 3. A meeting between the two parties indeed took place in early December, which Fajon reported as "positive." The SED delegation confirmed its intention to cease the sending of propaganda, which indeed seems to have happened. APCF, BP, 19/12/68.
 - 33 Hence, Soviet articles containing criticism of the PCF were not published in the party press. Decided by the Secretariat: APCF, Sec, 1/10/68.
 - 34 APCF, Sec, 28/11/68.
 - 35 "Avant-projet pour un article," s.n. (but most likely Rochet and/or Kanapa), s.d., APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 13, folder 1. This document is not mentioned in Vigreux, *Waldeck Rochet*.
 - 36 Besides, the Soviets also withheld direct funding to the PCF until 1969, as it did in the case of the PCI; after that, direct funding was resumed and maintained at

- \$ 2,000,000. Riva, *Oro da Mosca*, pp. 46–65. The BP and Secretariat meetings of September–October discussed the financial problems of the party, although without direct reference to the immediate cause. See, for example, APCF, BP, 26/9/68: “Rapport Georges Gosnat sur la situation financi  re du parti. Souligner le s  rieux de la situation financi  re du CC et des f  d  rations.”
- 37 Partial records of the CC meeting of October 1968 in Ivry-sur-Seine, on the basis of notes by Kanapa, *Kremlin–PCF*, pp. 131–142.
- 38 *Kremlin–PCF*, p. 134.
- 39 “PCF–Projet de la rencontre PCF–URSS sur la T  checoslovaquie,” s.n., s.d., APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 14, folder 4.
- 40 “Premi  re intervention Waldeck Rochet,” s.n., s.d., APCF, “  v  nements en T  checoslovaquie 1968,” box 2, folder 2.
- 41 “Premi  re intervention Waldeck Rochet,” s.n., s.d., APCF, “  v  nements en T  checoslovaquie 1968,” box 2, folder 2.
- 42 The draft Soviet communication can be found in *Kremlin–PCF*, pp. 207–210.
- 43 At the meeting Brezhnev provocatively stated that “de Gaulle understands our action in Czechoslovakia.” Report Marchais to the CC of December 1968, APCF, “  v  nements en T  checoslovaquie,” box 2, folder 2.
- 44 There are no details of this in the records, but Rochet noted: “... We are always ready to receive criticism when it is justified. Certainly during the struggle mistakes have been made. But we think our line was right.” “Sur une rencontre avec le PCUS,” s.n. (but Waldeck Rochet), s.d., 19 pp, APCF, fund Waldeck Rochet, box 13, folder 3. Also Streiff notes that the Soviets criticized the PCF’s line in May–June. Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 516.
- 45 It was said, furthermore, that the Champigny Manifesto of December 1968 (see chapter 7.) presented a first attempt to develop more sophisticated analyses. “Abt. Internationale Verbindungen. Berlin, 15/3/69. Zur abweichenden Haltung einiger kommunistischen und Arbeiterparteien, zu Grundfragen des Marxismus-Leninismus, zur kommunistischen Weltbezugung und zu wichtigen internationalen Fragen,” SAPMDB, ZPA-SED, DY/30/IV, 2/2.035, 27.
- 46 The pressure exerted on this issue by the Soviets on the French was tremendous. The Soviet delegates stated: “It is impossible to write in a communication that there are disagreements between us.” “Notes manuscrites: Les trois divergences profondes,” “Note sur la rencontre entre le PCF et le PCUS,” s.n., s.d., APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 14, folder 4. The final version of the communication can be found in *Kremlin–PCF*, pp. 213–216.
- 47 Report Marchais to the CC of December 1968, APCF, “  v  nements en T  checoslovaquie,” box 2, folder 2.
- 48 “Intervention devant le groupe parlementaire communiste sur la rencontre entre les d  l  gations de l’URSS–PCF,” s.n., s.d., 12 pp, APCF, fund Waldeck Rochet, box 13, folder 3. Rochet added: “Ultimately, what more could we expect?”
- 49 Rochet felt compelled to defend the position of the delegation in Moscow on his much-awaited speech at the Paris Mutualit   on the occasion of the anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. PCF, BP, 14/11/68.
- 50 Little is written on the plans for a West European communist conference in the aftermath of the invasion. Robrieux gives some detail on it: Robrieux, *La secte*, pp. 127–130. Although I agree with Robrieux’s picture of intense Soviet pre-

- ssures against this initiative, his argument that Rochet was planning with Longo to organize international opposition against the Soviet leadership seems exaggerated. See also Timmermann, “Das präkonziliäre Budapäster Karussell,” pp. 35–38.
- 51 Pajetta remembers that there was “full agreement” on the need to condemn the invasion. Pajetta, *Le crisi*, p. 130.
 - 52 This position was reaffirmed during the phone conversation between Longo and Rochet on the morning of the 23 August. Oral report Longo to the Direzione, APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020.0918. See also the account of this in Robrieux, *La secte*, pp. 125–127.
 - 53 Oral report Longo, APCI, Dir, 23/8/68, 020.0859 and 0905.
 - 54 For example, Bufalini affirmed that it would have been much more difficult for the PCI to express its dissent if the PCF had not done the same. APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020.0927.
 - 55 The PCI had telephone contact with the French, Austrian, British, Swedish, Spanish, Finnish and Belgian communist parties on several occasions. All reported in APCI, Dir, 23/8 and 18/9/68.
 - 56 The earliest trace of the KPÖ proposal is Galluzzi at the Direzione meeting: APCI, Dir, 23/8, 020.0913. The Soviets later accused the PCI of initially launching the idea—wrongly, it seems.
 - 57 It was added: “we doubt that he [Fischer] would obtain support from communist parties such as the French, Finnish, West German and Greek.” French translation of the article, s.n., s.d., in APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 13, folder 2.
 - 58 At the 23/8 meeting of the Direzione, Galluzzi and Berlinguer argued in favour of the KPÖ proposal, while Ingrao and Colombi were against. APCI, dir, 23/8, passim.
 - 59 “Luigi Longo: Sui fatti di Cecoslovacchia, Rapporto al CC,” in (PCI, ed.) *Il Partito comunista italiano*, p. 347.
 - 60 This was the case at least for Rochet, Kanapa and Fajon. Report by Galluzzi of his talks with the PCF leadership, APCI, Dir, 31/10, 020.1107.
 - 61 “Interview télévisée Radio Canada,” 26/8/68. APCF, Fund Fajon, box 8, folder 1.
 - 62 CPSU to PCF, 31/8/68, in APCF, “Événements en Tchécoslovaquie,” 2, 3.
 - 63 Mentioned in a letter from the PCF to the KPÖ (Muhri), 9/10/68. APCF, Événements en Tchécoslovaquie,” box 1, folder 5. A month later the KPÖ once more published that the PCF was in favour, to which the PCF again reacted strongly. “Lettre KPÖ a PCF, 25/10/68,” APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 13, folder 2.
 - 64 On this occasion Suslov reportedly said: “We have been informed that you and the Austrians are preparing a separate conference [...]. This will be a motive for an irreparable break.” Cossutta, “Note sul viaggio a Mosca,” 12/9/68, APCI, Dir, 020.0974.
 - 65 Galluzzi reported this. At this point Galluzzi changed his position, arguing against holding the conference as it would aggravate the polemics with the Soviets, maintaining instead intense informal contacts with the other West European CPs. APCI, Dir, 18/9, 020.0955 and 1076.
 - 66 APCI, Dir, 23/8/68, 020.0913. A delegation of the Direzione met with a delegation of the Yugoslavian League of Communists on 6/9 in Belgrade (APCI, Dir, 18/9, 020.0981); Colombi criticized this (APCI, Dir, 18/9, 020.0964).
 - 67 Report Longo to the Direzione, APCI, Dir, 23/8/68, 020.0918.

- 68 The tone of the letter makes clear that the difficult relations between the two parties also played a role in this decision, and the fact that in July Romania had not supported the PCF proposal for a conference. "Au Comité central du PC Roumain, 24/8/68," in APCF, "Événements en Tchécoslovaquie," box 2, folder 4. It should be noted that the Czechoslovak Communist Party itself had also suggested a pan-European communist conference, notably in an appeal by the Vysocany congress. According to Bartošek, Rochet promised the CPCS that he would raise the issue before the BP of his party. Bartošek, *Les Aveux*, p. 193.
- 69 I will go into some detail on this here, because the role played by the West European communist parties in this crucial phase has, in my view, either been overestimated (this is the case for example in Devlin, "The Role of the Non-ruling Communist Parties in Transforming Internationalism"), or ignored.
- 70 More detail on this in Medvedev, *On Stalin and Stalinism*, pp. 178–182.
- 71 Ouimet (*The Rise and Fall of the Brezhnev Doctrine*, pp. 58–59) also emphasizes the pressure to realign on Soviet terms inside the communist bloc after the invasion.
- 72 Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall*, p. 82.
- 73 Zimmerman, "Soviet Relations with Yugoslavia and Romania," in Terry, ed., *Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe*, pp. 125–153 at 136–148.
- 74 Ouimet, *The Rise and Fall*, pp. 70–74.
- 75 More detail in Korbonski, "Soviet Policy towards Poland," in Terry, *Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe*, pp. 61–92 at 63–66.
- 76 See Cohen, "The Sino-Soviet Border Crisis of 1969," pp. 269–296; Kuisong, "The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969," pp. 21–52; Gobarev, "Soviet Policy toward China," pp. 43–47.
- 77 It was added that, in the event of the September meeting taking place, the party would send a delegation only mandated to vote on the postponement of the conference. The letter is in APCI, annex to Dir 17/9, 020.0990.
- 78 See chapter 3.
- 79 For the perception of this in the PCI (Galluzzi) see APCI, Dir, 18/8, 020.0955.
- 80 Marchais's report to the Central Committee of 4–5/12/68, published in *Humanité* (Paris), 5–6/12/68.
- 81 "Note de Feix pour préparer la conférence internationale," 11/9/68, APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 14, folder 4.
- 82 With the exception of Colombi there was a broad consensus in the Direzione on the need for postponement, though the motives differed. APCI, Dir, 18/9/68, *passim*.
- 83 APCI, Dir, 18/9/68, 020.0955–8. While Pajetta was one of the few arguing in favour of sending a similar letter, Berlinguer was against it.
- 84 "Materiali per eventuale discussione a Budapest," s.n., s.d., APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 53.6.
- 85 "Dichiarazione non fatta. Comunicato pubblicato," s.n., s.d., APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 53.8.
- 86 Longo stated these two conditions openly in an interview with the non-communist paper *Astrolabio*. "Intervista all'Astrolabio del compagno Luigi Longo," 8/9/68, in (PCI, ed.) *Documenti politici dal XI al XII Congresso*, pp. 507–519.
- 87 The PCF asked the PCI (and probably other West European communist par-

- ties) to wait with the publication of their position after it had done so itself. APCI, Dir, 31/10, 020.1112.
- 88 The last three parties radicalized rapidly and suggested their unwillingness to attend the world conference *tout court*. APCI, Dir, 18/9/68, 020.0956.
- 89 Oral report by Berlinguer of the meeting, APCI, Dir, 4/10, 020.1073. The Swedish and Norwegian parties only sent observers.
- 90 Oral report by Berlinguer of the meeting, APCI, Dir, 4/10/68, 020.1071–1072.
- 91 APCI, Dir, 31/10, 020.1104. The CPCS had also requested not to bring up the invasion.
- 92 Cossutta's report: APCI, Dir, 31/10, 020.1102–1106.
- 93 See also chapter four.
- 94 Berlinguer's oral report of his meeting with the Soviets: APCI, Dir, 16/11, 020.1162–1167.
- 95 APCI, Dir, 16/11, 020.1166. The majority of the Direzione members followed him, as they realised that this shift would be hard to justify before the wider party and in Italy. Significantly, the Direzione had earlier decided not to call a CC meeting on this issue. APCI, Dir, 4/10, 020.1080. Berlinguer nevertheless claimed: "We might be blamed for deviating from our attitude of principle, but this change is to our advantage, because we can demonstrate that we go there [to Budapest] for the sake of unity and because it is a context of confrontation."
- 96 APCI, Dir, 4/10, 020.1073.
- 97 At the meeting, Rochet asked that the conference texts would mention, first, that relations between communist parties should be based on non-interference, and second, that bilateral and regional meetings would be formally allowed as forms of collaboration between parties. Pressure from the Soviets was such that the PCF delegation dropped this demand. "Première intervention Waldeck Rochet," s.n., s.d., APCF, Fund "Événements en Tchécoslovaquie," box 2, folder 2.
- 98 Berlinguer had already understood this at the September meeting in Budapest, when he noted "the opposite demands converge." APCI, Dir, 4/10/68, 020.1072. This has also been argued by J.B. Urban, against the dominant interpretation of the 1969 conference. Urban, *Moscow and the Italian Communist Party*, p. 255.
- 99 The projects for a new permanent structure of the world communist movement have received little attention in the literature.
- 100 The PCF Secretariat decided, in an unusually explicit way: "No acceptance of the proposal to form 'an international press and information agency of communist and workers' parties' and firm opposition to anything which in one way or the other will lead to the construction of an international centre." APCF, Sec, 28/11/68.
- 101 APCF, Sec, 28/11/68.
- 102 Devlin, "The Role of Non-ruling Communist Parties," p. 30.
- 103 A "Commission of Eight Parties" was responsible for the drafting of a main document and a "peace manifesto." Members of this commission were the communist parties of the Soviet Union, Hungary, Romania, Italy, France, Japan, Belgium and Venezuela. The French joined in later at their own request. See "Décisions de la Commission préparatoire de Budapest," APCF, BP, 27/3/69.
- 104 This according to the report of Galluzzi to the Direzione: APCI, Dir, 16/4/69, 020.1391. Galluzzi also noted that the Soviet delegation was divided internally.

- 105 The PCF press reported none of these meetings, and no records of them can be found in the PCF archives. They are mentioned at the BP meetings (ACF, BP, 27/3/69) and in a manuscript of Waldeck Rochet, which stated quite explicitly: "Our goal is to favor their support for the draft text" [the main conference document]. "Note manuscrite: travail préparatoire de la conférence internationale," s.d., APCF, Fund Rochet, box 14, folder 4.
- 106 "Décisions de la Commission préparatoire de Budapest," APCF, BP, 27/3/69.
- 107 "Blitz-telegram" 23/5/69, Hermann Axen in Budapest to Ulbricht and Honecker in Berlin. SAPMDB, ZPA-SED, DY/30/IV 2/2.035 (Büro Hermann Axen), 27.
- 108 "Décisions de la Commission préparatoire de Budapest," APCF, BP, 27/3/69.
- 109 "Proposition du PC belge. Lettre de Drumaux, Bruxelles 4/2/69. Note à la Commission de 8 Partis." APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 73.
- 110 Especially the PCI and the Romanian CP insisted on this. "Aufzeichnung. Betr.: Erste Wertung der Weltkonferenz der kommunistischen Parteien" 18/6/69, s.n. MfAA-PA, Bestand B 40, Band 178, 84.00, p. 3.
- 111 The PCF reproached the Italians for turning this issue into a question of honour. "Décisions de la commission préparative de Budapest," APCF, BP, 27/3/69
- 112 At a meeting with Hermann Axen of the SED in January 1968, for example, Gaston Plissonnier and Jean Jérôme had said that, while it should remain clear that the communist parties were the only vanguard forces of any progressive movement, it could be envisaged that some non-Marxist liberation movements could be invited to the conference as observers. "Vermerk ueber die Aussprache zwischen Gen. Axen, und den Gen. Plissonnier und Jérôme," Abteilung Internationale verbindungen, Berlin, den 24. Januar 1968, 9p. dact, p. 5. BA, SAPMDB, ZPA-SED, DY/30 IVA 2/20, 457.
- 113 See the next chapter for the 12th Congress.
- 114 Since April, Galluzzi, the key actor present at all the preparatory meetings, had considered sections one, two and three of the four draft resolutions unacceptable and had advised the party not to sign these. APCI, Dir, 16/4/69, 7–8/5/69 and 29/5/69.
- 115 Oral report Berlinguer to the Direzione, APCI, Dir, 20/6/69, 006–1721. The PCF at this point volunteered to negotiate between the PCI and the CPSU. APCI, Dir, 20/6/69, 006–1734.
- 116 Berlinguer noted with concern that the Soviet Union "will not accept unity in diversity in one day," because "the question of dissent raises the question of internal dissidence [in the Soviet Union]." Brezhnev, according to him, had "very specific ideas on internationalism." APCI, Dir, 20/6/69, 006–1742.
- 117 Berlinguer also asked the rhetorical question: "What interest is there for the Soviet Union to break with us? [...] After August there were polemics [from the Soviet Union] but not a break." Even Cossutta agreed with Berlinguer, and, referring to a possible cessation of Soviet funding, noted that the party should "prepare itself." APCI, Dir, 7–8/5/69, 006–1703–1709.
- 118 This was the analysis made by the SED: "Zur abweichende Haltung einiger kommunistischen und Arbeiterparteien zu grundfragen des ML, zur kommunistischen Weltbewegung und zu wichtige internationalen Fragen," Abteilung Internationale Verbindungen, Berlin, 15/3/69, SAPMDB, SED-ZK, DY 30/IV 2/2.035, 27.

CHAPTER 7.
Resetting Internationalism
1969–1970

Resetting the party line on internationalism and on domestic strategy was, to the PCI and PCF, a matter of responding to the urgent problems which had emerged following the invasion: disunity in the party, the crisis of identity, and disturbed relations with domestic political partners. The precondition, and at the same time the closing piece, of this process was the construction of an official narrative regarding the Czechoslovak crisis itself. As the attempts undertaken by both party leaderships to square the circle and to close the case of Czechoslovakia failed, the wider process of realignment also remained incomplete. In both parties, there were currents which did not accept the realignment and proposed alternatives and further-reaching change. The mere mention of Czechoslovakia in this context became an expression of unwillingness to accept the realignment. Both party leaderships reacted to this in a markedly authoritarian way.

In the case of the PCF, the literature has noted that either no change occurred in the party's internationalism after 1968, or the party became more dependent on the Soviet Union.¹ While this dependency was undoubtedly an important aspect of its internationalism in the years following 1968, other, more fundamental, shifts occurred. In the case of the PCI, the literature has either not noted a significant change or has understood the changes in a positive light, emphasizing the party's increased autonomy from the world communist movement and overlooking the tensions in this.² I will analyze here the resetting of internationalism and will point out the limits within which this occurred and the new contradictions it created in the two cases. While the PCI shifted its attention to what it understood as the strategic underpinning of internationalism, based largely on anti-imperialism as a source of legitimation, the PCF shifted towards an identification with the historical communist movement, based on its traditional understanding of revolution as a source of legitimation.

1. THE PCI

1.1. *From selective remembering to withdrawal*

In the aftermath of the Czechoslovak crisis, the PCI leadership attempted to construct a partial remembering of the past events in Czechoslovakia and a biased analysis of the current events. While the Prague Spring, the invasion and the dissent became part of the party's official history, the post-invasion situation in Czechoslovakia, the "normalization" and the ongoing repression, were increasingly tabooed. This went hand in hand with a withdrawal from involvement in the events there. The taboo involved, firstly, the circumstances under which Dub  ek was replaced by Hus  k; secondly, the continued Soviet interference; and thirdly, the political repression in the following years. The enduring crisis in the Czechoslovak political system was less and less brought into connection with the invasion and with Soviet interference. Instead, the "anti-socialist" and "anti-Soviet elements" in Czechoslovak society were increasingly often referred to. The taboo was less encompassing than in the case of the PCF. There were three reasons for this: firstly, the margins of maneuver which the PCI had negotiated with the Soviets in November 1968 were much wider; secondly, the "normalized" CPCPS placed far less pressure on the PCI; and finally, there were more in the party and the leadership who wanted to remember the Prague Spring in a positive way. There were fewer discontinuities in the PCI's analysis of the Czechoslovak events before and after the invasion than in the case of the PCF.

As regards the crisis in Czechoslovakia in March–April 1969, the PCI press covered the ice-hockey incidents, the visit of Soviet defense minister Grechko, and the changes at the top of the communist party without much comment. It stopped well before making the links between these events explicit. *Unit  * blamed "anti-socialist" and "anti-Soviet" elements for the ice-hockey incidents, thus reproducing the official interpretation by the CPCPS Presidium.³ Moreover, *Unit  * reproduced in a matter-of-fact way the Presidium declaration which put partial responsibility for the incidents on the (party and other) press. It mentioned the measures against *Rude Pravo* and the suspension of CC journal *Politika* without, however, in any way making clear that this meant restoring censorship.⁴ In the context of the world communist movement, conscious breaking of the taboo was at times employed by the PCI to re-evoke the dissent and to reinforce autonomy. This happened, for instance, when the PCI issued a straightforward state-

ment of protest against the ousting of Dubček in April 1969. A communication by the Ufficio politico considered the ousting of Dubček, “the personification of renewal and democratic socialism since January 1968,” as a sign of “the gravity of the crisis,” which it was said was the result of the military intervention.⁵ It demanded the restoration of “full sovereignty” and the halting of “any form of interference.” After the removal of Dubček, the PCI had difficulties in identifying with any political actor in Czechoslovakia, thus press coverage was increasingly minimal and superficial.

Internally, the Direzione was significantly better informed of the enduring political crisis in Czechoslovakia and of Soviet interference and pressure. Of the many reports that it received during the first half of 1969 from non-official Czechoslovak sources (most often opponents of the new regime) and from its own members traveling to the country, hardly anything came through in the party’s public coverage.⁶ Between January and March, G. Pecorari had a series of conversations with A. Svoboda, editor of *Politika*. Svoboda reported cases of Soviet interference in politics, including regular attacks on party leaders and continuous pressure to oust reformists. Furthermore, he reported on the current propaganda campaign against Smrkovský and Dubček, sponsored by normalizers in the highest party ranks.⁷ In March, Svoboda informed the PCI of a Soviet ultimatum to the CPCS leaders to install complete press censorship, and of the organization by the Soviets of “action groups” which controlled the party meetings.⁸ Besides, in this period Pecorari regularly traveled to Prague to talk with J. Pelikán, the reform-oriented head of national tele-vision during the Prague Spring, one of the first to be dismissed from office after the invasion. In a conversation in early February, Pelikán drew an overall picture of the enduring political pressure exercised on Dubček by Husák, Strougal and their allies, and of their attempts to undermine Dubček’s position.⁹ Following the April crisis, Pelikán informed Pecorari of the fact that the party and state leaders in Czechoslovakia had not been informed of the arrival of Grechko, and that the latter had re-enforced security measures.¹⁰

Admittedly, as these reports were sometimes contradictory it was hard for the PCI leadership to gain a fair picture of the situation. Moreover, matters were more blurred since former advocates of reform, such as Kaderka, now advised the PCI to support the “realist line” and Husák, whom they said was not an unconditional supporter of the Soviets.¹¹ Thus, the PCI leadership in the first instance had difficulty in judging the Husák line amidst the complex situation in the CPCS. However, by the summer of

1969 the PCI received unambiguously alarming reports on the course that the new leadership was taking. Pecorari reported that there was proof that the power change in April had been entirely orchestrated by the Soviets and that the incidents had been taken up as a pretext for intervention.¹² In August, he drew a detailed picture of the repression under Hus  k and reported the activities of armed groups, supported by the Soviet Embassy.¹³ A warning was given by F. Moranino, who had regularly informed the PCI in 1968 of the problems connected to the Prague Spring and could hardly be called a Dub  ek supporter, that Hus  k was seriously influenced and pressured by pro-Soviet conservatives such as Strougal, Indra and Bil  k. He also reported on the purges going on inside the party.¹⁴

The limits of the taboo materialized through problematic bilateral relations with the "normalized" CPCS, although, in contrast to the PCF case, painful public incidents were avoided. While relations with the CPCS between the invasion and Dub  ek's ousting were confused, relations with Hus  k's CPCS were close to non-existent, apart from attempts by the latter to force the PCI to observe a complete taboo on the Czechoslovak crisis. After the PCI statement of mid-April, Hus  k sent a letter to the PCI in which he asked them not to "internationalize" the issue of Czechoslovakia—by which he meant that the PCI, as long as it did not reproduce the "normalized" interpretation of the events, should abstain from any positioning. Especially problematic to the CPCS, it was said, was the fact that some PCI texts (such as the resolution on internationalism of the 12th Party Congress which will be discussed below) were circulated among opponents of the regime.¹⁵ The PCI, in contrast to the PCF, made a clear point of not wanting to be drawn into further discussions or polemics.¹⁶ The fact that relations were frozen became very clear at the Moscow Conference of June 1969: the Czechoslovak delegation (Strougal and Bil  k) avoided any contact with the PCI. Worse, Bil  k asked the Soviets to open the conference proceedings with an attack on revisionism and the PCI, which the Soviets, according to the report, refused.¹⁷ By avoiding any *au fond* discussion of the Czechoslovak events in the context of the world communist movement, the PCI succeeded in avoiding open conflicts and resisting to pressure; on the other hand, by doing so it contributed to rendering the debates in this context devoid of real ideological or strategic significance.

1.2. *The shift to strategic internationalism*

1.2.1. *The 12th Party Congress*

The 12th Party Congress, held in Bologna in February 1969, was meant to solve the problems and tensions in the party which the Czechoslovak crisis had brought to the surface. While it did succeed in doing so to some extent, it also created new contradictions. The Congress decided upon significant changes in the party's internationalism. These were the result of the Czechoslovak crisis, but also of the developments on the Italian Left in late 1968–early 1969 and their effects inside the party. After the unrest peak of February–May 1968, the student movement as a whole fell apart while small groups rapidly radicalized in terms of discourse and tactics. The transformation of identity that was taking place on the radical Left was reflected in important disagreements between the many groups on various political questions, among which was the organization of a new revolutionary party. Nevertheless, a number of small parties in this period acquired a nation-wide basis and merged into broader groups. All of these groups featured a strong revolutionary Marxist-Leninist discourse, and Third World and Maoist elements flourished. Well-known (proto-)Maoist groups were, for example, *Unione dei comunisti italiani*, *Potere operaio*, and *Lotta continua*.¹⁸ These groups, as well as Trotskyite groups such as *Avanguardia operaia*, criticized the political parties of the Left, primarily the PCI, for their gradualism and reformism, their integration in institutionalized politics, and their shift away from “workerism.” To the PCI, this situation was highly problematic: Maoism, in particular, seriously pressured the left flank of the party. Partly as a result of this, the situation inside the party on the eve of the 12th Party Congress was quite dramatic. At a number of the federal congresses, including Rome, Venice and Naples, important disagreement over the theses surfaced and the leadership was attacked on several occasions. Some of the *Direzione* members feared the formation of what they called “fractional groups” or “groups in a pre-organizational phase.”¹⁹ While the theses were adopted in only 67 of the 102 federations, in 22 federations there had been votes against the theses, and in 13 federations abstentions—which was a highly unusual situation for the PCI. The criticism was mostly of a leftist nature and tended towards Maoism; criticism of the party's continued alignment with the Soviet-led communist world occurred often.²⁰

Disagreement with the line on Czechoslovakia merged with older forms of criticism of the leadership. The unusually widespread criticism of the

draft theses to the 12th Congress involved domestic strategy as well as international relations, and was often brought into connection with the various aspects of the Czechoslovak crisis. Important criticism was expressed at the October CC meeting in preparation for the congress from exponents of the Ingrao Left: Ingrao himself, Pintor, and R. Rossanda.²¹ Allied with Ingrao since the early 1960s (the so-called *ingraiani*), they were strongly influenced by new, radical Left ideas regarding the self-determination of workers, factory councils and direct democracy. Rossanda and Pintor had argued since 1967 in favor of a more open, a more equal and a more constant collaboration between the party and the student movements. While Ingrao continued to argue for a fundamental discussion on the link between democracy and socialism with the Prague Spring as point of reference, Pintor, from a radical-revolutionary perspective, advocated "self-government of the masses" and suggested a less biased investigation of the "Chinese experience."²² Rossanda touched upon the problem of d  tente and spoke explicitly of the great disillusionment of the invasion, namely that it had revealed a disregard on the part of the Soviets vis-  -vis communism in the West.²³ Crucially, also some central leaders took up this point: notably, Amendola stated that the Soviets had a "wrong definition of peaceful coexistence."²⁴

In addition to the internal party problems, there was direct pressure from the Soviets on the PCI leadership regarding the congress texts. While Soviet pressure did not lead to change in the party line, it did lead to a situation in which Czechoslovakia was referred to in a conditioned way—which only added to the frustration on the (far) Left. On 21 January a meeting took place in Moscow between Berlinguer, Galluzzi and Cossutta on the one hand, and Ponomarev, Suslov, Zagladin and Pelsci on the other.²⁵ The latter on this occasion seriously pressured the former to change some elements of the theses: firstly, some aspects of the critical analysis of the Soviet Union and the socialist states; secondly, the interpretation of the Czechoslovak crisis; and thirdly, far-reaching statements on the differences between conceptions of socialism in the PCI and in Eastern Europe. Also, the Soviets claimed to fear that an "unfriendly atmosphere" might arise at the Congress and that the discussion on Czechoslovakia might be resumed. They threatened not to attend the Congress (which in intra-communist relations was considered as highly insulting and suggested the isolation of the party in question). Berlinguer, while not willing to discuss the content of the theses, guaranteed a "friendly atmosphere." He assured that, while the party was developing a critical analysis of the socialist countries, it

would never question “the historical value and the superiority [of the Soviet Union] and its role [in the global struggle].”

At the 12th Congress, a centrist line emerged around Longo and, especially, Berlinguer. Berlinguer’s election as vice-general secretary at the 12th Congress codified his rise to power which had been ongoing since November 1968. The new line on internationalism, it seems, reflected largely his views. While, as will become clear below, a united leadership was a priority to him, his position was not centrist in the sense of seeking the common denominator among the different currents. Rather, his aim was to push internationalism towards innovations and to maximize support for this among the leadership by making concessions on other points. He displayed far-reaching pragmatism in using the Czechoslovak crisis in order to carry out changes on specific questions such as party autonomy. After the Moscow Conference of June 1969, Berlinguer increasingly appeared as the leading figure in the party; he was elected general secretary in 1972.²⁶

The central current, supported by, among others, Galluzzi and Pajetta, was heavily pressured by the Left: while Ingrao chose a position of party-loyal criticism, Rossanda, Pintor and A. Natoli fundamentally questioned the party’s internationalism and its domestic strategy and called for a far-reaching reform of the party. Rossanda once more argued for the need to make explicit the shortcomings of peaceful coexistence, which, in her view, tended towards an agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States. In line with new anti-imperialist radicalism, she argued not only for the end of the dominance of the socialist states over the communist world, but in favor of the dominance of the Third World liberation movements.²⁷ Pintor heavily attacked the party on the issue of domestic strategy. He criticized it for minimizing the current social crisis and for failing to understanding it as an authentic crisis of the system. He radically rejected strategies based on political alternatives, arguing instead that it was the constellation of political parties itself which needed to be attacked. The party, in his view, had unambiguously to opt for alliances with the student movements and should shift its attention at spontaneous worker radicalism.²⁸

As the combined result of the pressure from the Left, and the party’s unwillingness fundamentally to reconsider its domestic program, a sort of implicit trade-off took place between the domestic program and internationalism. In order to avoid radical changes in terms of domestic strategy, the centrist current was willing to make rather far-reaching concessions to the

Left in terms of internationalism.²⁹ A conception of internationalism emerged which was an innovative view on solidarity on a global scale. It was the continuation of thinking initiated in the late 1950s and 1960s (polycentrism and *allargamento*), and was accelerated by the post-invasion debate of 1968. The main points were:

- a pragmatic conceptualization of the world communist movement in its “largest possible” shape;
- a shared global strategy against imperialism/capitalism as being more important as the underpinning of this movement than a shared doctrine;
- an increased emphasis on European *détente* and peaceful coexistence. The meaning of these concepts did not undergo a fundamental change, but they were specified; this specification consciously ignored a number of contradictions;
- a radicalization in terms of Italian foreign policy, anti-Americanism and opposing NATO;
- the development of a limited criticism of “really existing socialism,” which was a historicized, contextualized and relative one;
- a disconnection between the evaluation of the socialist regimes on the one hand and the individual conception of socialism and domestic strategy on the other.

The PCI's internationalism after 1968 was narrowed down to the strategic dimension and tended to dismiss the doctrinal and organizational dimensions. While it became increasingly clear that the PCI disagreed with the protagonists of the world communist movement on major issues of doctrine and avoided substance-related discussions, in organizational terms it had, throughout the 1968–1969 crisis, succeeded in claiming *for itself* a singularly autonomous position. The shift towards strategy permitted the PCI to accentuate anti-imperialism as a domestic source of legitimation, referring increasingly to the struggle in the Third World.³⁰ The fact that the PCI signed only the section regarding “the global anti-imperialist struggle” at the Moscow Conference illustrated this shift. The “role which the socialist countries and the Soviet Union play in the global struggle for democracy and revolution” was to become the most often repeated justification for the continued alliance with the Soviet Union.³¹ The party increasingly referred to the movements of national liberation and the ex-colonies.³²

On the European level, the common strategy was peaceful coexistence and *détente*. It was reaffirmed that peaceful coexistence was considered as “the historical continuation of the class struggle on a world scale.”³³ However, despite the attention granted to it, Berlinguer made sure to take the sting out of the *détente* problem. He did so by focusing on the question in a channeled way, and by putting aside the well-understood divergence of interests that had occurred in the communist world regarding *détente* and its implications for internal bloc cohesion. Berlinguer specified the PCI’s definition of *détente* as “dynamic *détente*”: a development of gradual dissolution of the blocs linked to change in the regimes in Eastern Europe and to the transition to socialism in the West. The theses emphasized that *détente* needed to go hand in hand with the “advances of socialism” and that it was an offensive strategy.³⁴ Dynamic *détente* was opposed to static *détente*, understood as a bottom-down policy carried out by both superpowers and not necessarily linked to change inside the blocs. Without this always being made clear, static *détente* referred to the logic that had led the Soviet leaders to invade Czechoslovakia. Moreover, it was said in the theses that “*détente* had not been sufficiently developed” (by the socialist countries, it was understood) and that the bloc logic was still alive.³⁵ There was thus a willful ignoring of the fact that it was exactly the pursuit of *détente* in the superpowers’ understanding of it that maintained the bloc logic.

The accentuation of the offensive and dynamic dimension of *détente* went at this point hand in hand with a revived anti-NATO discourse. The positions on Italian foreign policy and NATO were somewhat radicalized with respect to the previous years. This was not, in the PCI’s concept, in contradiction with *détente*, nor did it imply a major change in the party’s *détente* policy. Rather, it was part of the specification and the narrowing down of the concept which was the result of Czechoslovakia: European and global *détente* meant first and foremost the disintegration of the political-military blocs, hence “NATO out of Italy, Italy out of NATO.”³⁶ This slogan, as well as the perspective of a neutral Italy, had been downplayed in the preceding years and were now taken up again.³⁷ The revived anti-NATO discourse now followed up on the shift undertaken immediately following the invasion, motivated by reflexes of identity, to blame the West for the Cold War. Furthermore, radicalizing in terms of foreign policy was to the centrist current in the leadership a fairly unproblematic way to respond to the pressure from the far Left. It also seemed to go along with the current tide, especially in the context of the protests against the war in

Vietnam which continued to dominate political discourse and mobilization on the West European Left.

There were two major contradictions inherent in this concept of internationalism. The first one has been noted above: the central leadership was well aware of the fact that different conceptions of détente existed in the world communist movement. Secondly, it was not clear whether the PCI wished to strive for the general acceptance in the world communist movement of its own concept of détente, and if so, how realistic this was. On the one hand, the PCI claimed to be determined to strive for the acceptance of this concept of internationalism in the world communist movement. At the 12th Congress Berlinguer stressed the PCI's readiness to combat "wrong conceptions of internationalism," such as the policy of global war with the West and antagonism between the Third World and other parts of the world (referring to China), and the "underestimation" of the role of the workers' movement in the West. This implicitly referred to the Soviet Union and was reminiscent of the argumentation against the invasion in August 1968.³⁸ On the other hand, Berlinguer suggested only limited optimism as to the party's ability to influence the Soviet-led communist world. Defending the PCI's involvement in the upcoming world communist conference in the face of criticism from the Left, Berlinguer described the PCI's stance as a "politics of presence."³⁹ This suggested the end of the "change from within" policy which had characterized the PCI's approach vis-à-vis the world communist movement since 1956, or, at the least, a very minimal conception of it.

The fact that internationalism was henceforth based only to a minor extent on a shared doctrine made it possible for the leadership to develop and officials a careful form of criticism of the socialist regimes. The invasion had made the leadership understand that an uncritical analysis of the socialist regimes was no longer tenable—either vis-à-vis other domestic political forces or vis-à-vis the party. At the 12th Party Congress, Berlinguer defined a carefully critical judgement of the socialist countries, including the Soviet Union and even the Bolshevik Revolution. In PCI tradition, this major change was carefully initiated, channeled and guided by the leadership. A historical and actual contextualization of the socialist regimes was intended to serve as a framework for the "correct" understanding of their shortcomings. In the PCI, and, as we shall see further below, to some extent also in the PCF, criticism of these regimes was henceforth possible, provided it was historicized and contextualized.⁴⁰

- it should always be emphasized that, despite their shortcomings, these regimes were superior to capitalist regimes; the shortcomings of these regimes should always be counterbalanced with some examples of shortcomings of capitalist regimes⁴¹
- the socialist and revolutionary character of these regimes should not be questioned
- a historical justification of the shortcomings was developed:
 - all the socialist states were young and in development
 - the Soviet Union was born out of the circumstances of tsarist Russia, unsuited to socialist development
 - the situation before the Second World War, “socialism in one country,” was not natural to socialism
 - after the Second World War, the Soviet Union and the East European regimes suffered from the difficult circumstances of capitalist encirclement and isolation
 - many current problems in the Soviet Union were still consequences of the personality cult; this had damaged the value of socialism in the Soviet Union, but, importantly, it was the regime itself which had isolated and (partly) overcome this problem.

Unlike what happened in the PCF, criticism of the Soviet Union also affected 1917 and the Bolshevik model. The argument was developed that, while 1917 had created the structures for the abandonment of private property, this had proven insufficient for the creation of socialism.⁴² At the same time, however, criticism in general terms, on grounds of principle and in relation to the definition of socialism, was avoided. Thus, the limits of the PCI's de-Stalinization were reproduced: also after 1956, although the first critical distance from the communist world was taken and the PCI had started to develop its *own* concept of socialism, it had not linked this to a wider discussion of socialism in the existing regimes. Nor did such a debate take place now. The criticism of the socialist regimes remained a relativist one and did not open up questions as to the universal relevance of these experiences. It was disconnected from the debate on domestic strategy and socialism in Italy. The only connection referred to in this respect was the vague notion of “qualitative difference” between really existing socialism and socialism-to-be in Italy. It was not a coincidence, then, that the Soviets, during their meeting with Berlinguer, specifically objected to this point.⁴³

The leadership expected these changes in internationalism to make it possible to avoid a dramatic change in domestic strategy as well as a fundamental debate on the nature of socialism, and it also expected them to soothe intra-party tensions. The domestic strategy laid down at the 12th Congress, although it did incorporate some leftist elements and discourses, basically continued the line decided in 1966. The political-institutional dimension of the PCI's strategy was strongly re-assessed: parliamentary work remained an important pillar, and unity of action with the Left of the Socialist and Christian Democratic parties was envisaged, without aiming at destroying the party constellation. Both Longo and Berlinguer argued that the question of political alliances had been underestimated by the congress debates. Berlinguer emphasized that in Italy the "social radicalization" had "political points of reference": the PCI, the PSIUP and the CGIL.⁴⁴ Attacking Pintor, he strongly argued against the provocation of an acute crisis of the centre-left government.⁴⁵ The strategy of structural reforms was also continued, although it was emphasized, in order to mark the difference with reformism, that this was only an intermediate step on the road to socialism.⁴⁶

A major shift away from Leninist doctrine was the fact that the "vanguard role of the communist party" was no longer mentioned. Some of the old Leninist concepts were replaced by terms taken from Gramsci, which were to become points of reference for the PCI's overall identity and very influential on the Italian Left as a whole. The old strategy of alliances was transformed into the creation of a Gramscian historical bloc, based on the hegemony of the working classes and, as it was emphasized, not of the party.⁴⁷ In order to construct it, unity of action should come about between the PCI, the PSIUP, the Left of the Socialist and Christian Democratic Parties, the unified trade union movement and radical, leftist and other groups in civil society. The autonomy of all these groups was guaranteed—which was a central claim of the *movimento*. Entry into government was not envisaged in the short term as Amendola had proposed; rather, an "open relationship" with government and the construction of a "new majority" was envisaged.⁴⁸ The main shortcomings of the new domestic programme, which attempted to respond to the challenges which both the Prague Spring and the new revolutionary movements posed, were to do with the question of alliances and pluralism. As a consequence of both the Prague Spring debate and the rise of the new radical movements in Italy, much of the discussions evolved around pluralism and the relation between

the party and other groups and movements. Despite this, and despite the many affirmations that socialism in Italy would not be a one-party system, the question of the pluralist nature of the “road” towards socialism and socialism itself remained vague.⁴⁹ The use of Gramscian concepts such as historical bloc and hegemony, however innovative and important in the further development of the party and its strategy, also served to evade tricky questions regarding the precise position of the communist party in relation to other groups.⁵⁰

1.2.2. *The contradictions: the Sino–Soviet clashes*

The viability of the PCI’s new conception of internationalism and its acceptance in the Soviet-led communist world were most seriously jeopardized by two factors: the conclusions of the world communist conference of June 1969 discussed above; and the Sino–Soviet border clashes in the spring of 1969. In addition, the minimal effect of the PCI’s discussions with the West German SPD in 1969 suggested the PCI’s limited potential for causing significant, wider change in the world communist movement and in European détente.⁵¹ The dramatic revival of the Sino–Soviet conflict caused yet another acute crisis in the PCI leadership. This was because it undermined some basic features of the newly defined, complex and therefore fragile conception of internationalism, such as doctrinal pluralism in the world communist movement and the recognition of the role played by China in global strategy. Since the PCI leaders understood very well that at least one of the causes behind the Sino–Soviet border clashes was another Soviet attempt to realign “its” world communist movement, many of them reacted with outright anger. The atmosphere inside the Direzione was comparable to that in August 1968: a general sense of gravity, outright and bitter criticism of the Soviet Union, but also reflexes of defense of the Soviet Union against China. However, whereas in August 1968 there had been a wide consensus on the general line to follow, disagreement now appeared in full.

Leaders such as Galluzzi, who were usually considered as being loyal to the Soviet Union, now took their criticism of the Soviets a step further. In a *Unità* article he argued, in couched terms but nevertheless clearly, that the Soviets, rather than reproducing their rhetoric on the unity of the world communist movement, should finally accept pluralism inside it.⁵² Berlinguer also took up the opportunity harshly to criticize the Soviet Union, although behind closed doors. While specifying his disagreement with China over a

number of doctrinal matters, he argued for the recognition of the role which China played on the revolutionary movements on a global level.⁵³ There was a sharp contrast between, on the one hand, his pragmatism—which at this point seemed to tend towards a “neutral” position for the PCI in between the two largest socialist states—and, on the other hand, the sharply loyalist and ideological reaction of Amendola, Napolitano and Pajetta. Pajetta was strongly opposed to such a neutral position and called for loyalty to the Soviet Union.⁵⁴ Napolitano also urged the party to take a clear stance, blaming the Chinese for the clashes.⁵⁵ At the Direzione meeting in early May, Amendola argued for an increase of criticism of China in terms of doctrine and strategy; Ingrao fiercely objected to this.⁵⁶

The problem was complicated by the fact that the 12th Congress had demonstrated the extent to which Maoist ideas had diffused in the party, amongst the rank and file as well as the leadership. The party’s “Maoist dilemma” once more came to the surface: how to reconcile the advocating of doctrinal pluralism and autonomy in the communist world on the one hand, with an anti-Maoist campaign inside the party on the other. The disagreements could not result in anything other than an ambiguous position on the issue. No party communication blaming China for the clashes, as had been requested by the more Soviet-loyal leaders, was issued, nor was criticism of China significantly intensified. The party press generally blamed China for the border clashes, but not without criticizing the Soviet leaders for not having carried out the “promises” of the 20th Congress. Most importantly, an anonymous *Unità* article openly reported on the attempts to rehabilitate Stalin in the Soviet Union, and on the harsh persecution of the political opposition there.⁵⁷

The question was discussed at the Central Committee meeting of late May, on the basis of a report drafted by Berlinguer, Galluzzi and Bufalini. This report, although it resumed the 12th Congress line on internationalism, was a matter of lively discussion. It was adopted by the Direzione and the CC, but only after a number of substantial changes were made by Longo.⁵⁸ Regarding the border conflict itself, the document clearly aligned the party with the Soviet Union, stating that the conflict was caused by China, which exerted unjust pressure towards the revision of the existing borders. In addition, China was criticized for its rejection of peaceful coexistence and for the Cultural Revolution. On the other hand, the document was critical of the Soviet Union on the following points: the arms race and the “balance of terror,” nationalist and dominant attitudes by the two superpowers in their

respective camps, the need to acknowledge the strategic importance of China in the global struggle, and the observation of the principles of independence and non-interference in relations between socialist states. Most importantly, the document specified the “correct understanding” of peaceful coexistence: the situation of agreements between the two superpowers and the five atomic powers was only a temporary phase in a process towards a situation of the sovereignty of each state. At this point, the party needed to make clear that its concept of dynamic détente needed to be “shielded” by state sovereignty, a concept to which PCI texts had not referred since August 1968. Again, a strong argument was made against an understanding of peaceful coexistence on the basis of the blocs and against the hegemony of the superpowers inside the blocs; moreover, it was stated explicitly that this situation hindered the democratization of the socialist countries.

As a result of the revived Sino–Soviet conflict, the PCI reinforced its shift towards strategic internationalism. This implied, firstly, a further shift of attention towards the Third World and the “offensive” strategy against imperialism.⁵⁹ Secondly, it implied a further downplaying of the doctrinal dimension of internationalism: as Galluzzi said, an evaluation of the Chinese regime should be avoided, as this raised the need for a more thorough evaluation of the Soviet and East European regimes.⁶⁰ The contradiction which arose from this—the lack of clarity as to why a common strategy should be developed with regimes with which one did not have much in common—was only aggravated.

1.3. *Leftist criticism*

Criticism from the far Left inside and outside the PCI continued to constitute the main challenge to the party in terms of its internationalist line, its domestic strategy and its unity as a party. The *Manifesto* affair of late 1969 should be understood as a consequence of the Czechoslovak crisis and a phase in the realignment process of the party. It unfurled in the context of the continued socio-political crisis in Italy, which developed in the “Hot Autumn” of 1969.

1.3.1. *The “Hot Autumn”*⁶¹

The student movement of 1967–1968 and the subsequent development into the formation of radicalized groups with a strong revolutionary discourse had important effects on the workers’ movement in Italy. The so-called Hot Autumn of 1969 erupted as a convergence of, on the one hand,

the choice by the radial movements of students and intellectuals to “move to the people,” and, on the other hand, the rapid radicalization of the mass of industrial workers. A number of spontaneous actions and strikes in the Pirelli factories in Milan and the Fiat factory in Turin from the summer of 1969 onwards quickly grew into a nationwide phenomenon of grass-roots, spontaneous and sometimes violent actions in factories and in the streets. The objectives of the Hot Autumn movements were somewhat different with respect to the traditional objectives of the workers movement in Italy and included, besides workplace-related issues and wage demands, issues such as pension reforms and educational reforms.⁶² While the PCI considered the radicalized student groups as largely threatening, its position with regard to the radicalization of the workers was another matter. In this case, it was willing to “delegate” what it saw as its traditional monopoly on the representation of the working classes to the communist-dominated trade union the CGIL. The CGIL had at that point already undergone a double development towards more autonomy from the PCI on the one hand, and towards convergence with the Christian-dominated CISL into a unified *sin-dacato* on the other.⁶³ Although in the first instance often taken by surprise by the spontaneous initiatives of the *Comitati di base*, the trade unions displayed a strong capacity for quickly adapting to the situation and regaining the initiative.⁶⁴

The PCI attempted to isolate the most radical segments of the political student groups and to minimize their influence over the workers. The convergence of worker and student militancy posed a greater challenge to the PCI than the eruption of student unrest had done in 1967–68. This was because the convergence was located at the heart of what the party considered to be its own terrain—the political representation of the working classes, mediation on behalf of the workers’ movement in political institutions, and the projection of a revolutionary political project. The revolutionary formations that grew out of 1968, and initiatives such as the factory councils and the *Comitati di base* seemed at that point to propose an alternative in all these respects. With their new methods and strong revolutionary discourse these groups, either implicitly or in explicit criticism, questioned the long-term fundamentals of the PCI’s domestic strategy and of the political role it saw for itself. The problem was made more complex by the fact that the ideas of the student movements, of the new Left and of Maoism continued to spread among the party rank and file.⁶⁵

1.3.2. *The “Manifesto affair”*

In this context, the challenge from the (far) Left in the party grew. The Central Committee meeting of November 1969 decided upon the “exclusion”⁶⁶ of Rossanda, Pintor and A. Natoli, who had one year earlier founded the *Manifesto* group, on the charge of “factional activities.” Since the 12th Congress they had not ceased to criticize the domestic and internationalist line of the party. As a monthly periodical from June 1969 onwards, the *Manifesto* featured severe criticism of the party line on fundamental questions. With its open and self-conscious dissent, it attempted to widen the space for debate and disagreement inside the party. The Hot Autumn seemed only to reinforce their arguments regarding the urgency of the crisis that, in their view, was not only social and political but also systemic. To them, the events of the autumn of 1969 demonstrated that the party’s domestic strategy had failed, and that radically new methods should be used to achieve new goals. The new radical movements, with their emphasis on revolution in Italy and the world, and their criticism of the institutional and party system, were considered a point of departure. Furthermore, the group wanted to provoke a debate on the PCI as a party, involving its very concept, its culture, its organization, and its relation to the wider society. A “new and other party” was called for, which would be, as it was argued, more in touch with movements in society, more fluid, less hierarchically organized but at the same time more revolutionary, reactive and decisive. However vague this party concept was, it antagonized many in the PCI as it suggested the replacement of the PCI by something entirely different.

Soviet-aligned internationalism was a central target of criticism from the outset. The first two issues of the journal included critical pre- and post-assessments of the Moscow Conference. While the *Manifesto* disagreed with the party’s choice to attend the conference, it vehemently opposed the taboo surrounding Czechoslovakia and the PCI’s unwillingness to criticize the socialist regimes more strongly than it did. The group took the criticism of the Soviet Union far beyond the limits of the criticism officially endorsed recently. It called not only for a distancing from the Soviet Union but also for active resistance against its domination over world communism. Sympathies for Maoism were no longer disguised and the Cultural Revolution was enthusiastically discussed as a model for revolution in the West. The revolutionary and socialist nature of the Soviet Union and the East European regimes was questioned, and, hence, the very basis of the PCI’s international alignment with these regimes. This position as a whole was highly problematic to the

PCI's strategic internationalism. It raised doubts as to the meaning of a strategic alliance on a world scale with powers that might not be revolutionary or socialist, and it demonstrated the vague character of internationalism if based only on strategy and not on a common conception of socialism.⁶⁷

It was around the issue of Czechoslovakia and "normalization" that the diverse forms of criticism crystallized. The *Manifesto* reconnected several issues which the August invasion had initially brought up in the PCI but which had been isolated from one another since: relations with the communist world, global strategy and global revolution, d  tente and Italian strategy as a part of it, and conceptions of revolution and socialism. The immediate cause of the initiation of the disciplinary procedure against Rossanda, Pintor and Natoli was a *Manifesto* editorial of September 1969 with the title "Prague is alone." The article repeated that the invasion of Czechoslovakia had been the consequence of deeply rooted problems in the Soviet Union rather than an "error," which, as it argued, was the interpretation that the PCI was now attempting to construct. It called for the "defeat" and the "replacement" of the Soviet leaders and urged the European Left to make "new [international] choices."⁶⁸

One reason why the *Manifesto* leaders were excluded was their rapidly growing popularity on the Italian Left.⁶⁹ The first issue of the journal sold 55,000 copies in a few days.⁷⁰ They stimulated the diffusion of (proto) Maoist positions and vocabulary in the party and on the Italian Left more generally, in a significant way. Those inside the central leadership who were less keen on excluding the *Manifesto* group, such as Berlinguer and Pajetta, were mostly concerned with this aspect and with the threat it posed to party unity. Pajetta referred to the "general disorientation" in the party and admitted that "we have vast zones to re-conquer in the party."⁷¹ In his concluding speech to the CC meeting, Berlinguer insisted on the "concrete damage that has been done to the party." He also invoked the importance of what he understood as "correct and loyal procedures," namely, that disagreement with the party line should be expressed inside the organization and not in an open forum.⁷² Although the excluded *Manifesto* leaders were former *ingraiani*, at the 12th Congress Ingrao had taken his distance from their most radical criticisms, which had added to their isolation. Ingrao explicitly distanced himself from Pintor on two points. Firstly, he argued that the rise of the new student and radical movements had not brought about a fundamental change in the class struggle. Secondly, he argued that collaboration with leftist groups of the Socialist and Christian Democratic

Parties should be the pillar of the party's strategy, rather than for a dramatic shift to the new radical movements.⁷³ Not willing to join the *Manifesto* group in its attacks on the party, and willing to abide by party discipline, he tried to convince them to moderate their statements.⁷⁴

There was strong pressure from the Right in the party to exclude the *Manifesto* group, for reasons that were more strongly ideological than those that motivated Berlinguer. Leaders such as Amendola, Bufalini and also Longo were deeply convinced that the *Manifesto* positions were wrong and fiercely attacked these at the CC meeting. Bufalini insisted that the group wanted the party completely to break its ties with the communist world, despite the fact that in her intervention Rossanda explicitly denied this. Longo claimed that the *Manifesto*'s positions on party organization would lead to a "liquidation" of the party.⁷⁵ The Natta report, on the basis of which Rossanda, Pintor, Caprara and Natoli were charged with factionist activity and which proposed their exclusion, was adopted by the Central Committee with only six opposing votes (among them the three accused and the critical intellectual L. Lombardo Radice) and two abstentions.⁷⁶ Soon afterwards, administrative measures were taken against four other collaborations on the journal, L. Magri, M. Caprara, V. Parlato and L. Castellina. There are signs of indirect Soviet pressure behind the expulsion of the *Manifesto* group, but it was far less explicit than that exerted by the Soviets on the PCF in terms of internal realignment, as will become clear below. At the height of the post-invasion conflict between the PCI and the CPSU, the Soviets, at a meeting with Cossutta in late October 1968, had made it clear that they considered as unacceptable the positions which Rossanda, Pintor and Natoli had taken at the CC meeting one month earlier.⁷⁷ As these positions were expressed in an increasingly open way, it can only be assumed that Soviet objections grew.⁷⁸ After the exclusions, the CPSU affirmed in *Pravda* its "complete agreement" with the decision of the PCI leadership.⁷⁹

Viewed in the longer term, the *Manifesto* affair was part of a process of dismantling the Left critique, which had been ongoing since the mid-1960s. It sanctioned the defeat of Ingrao at the 1966 congress. Its implications in terms of loss of affinity with the far Left in and outside the party, however, in the context of the (post-)student movements and the Hot Autumn, were now aggravated. There were direct links between the party's changed internationalism after Czechoslovakia and the *Manifesto* affair. Firstly, in the aftermath of the Czechoslovak crisis the elimination of the Left was need-

ed to demarcate the limits of acceptable criticism of the socialist regimes and to put a halt to the diffusion of Maoist ideas. Moreover, as the 12th Congress had narrowed down the underpinning for continued Soviet-aligned internationalism to (global and European) strategy, the question of whether this was indeed the adequate context for the PCI's domestic strategy could not be raised. In particular, the questions which the *Manifesto* raised with regard to d  t  nte and peaceful coexistence needed to be silenced, as the central leadership had decided after the invasion of Czechoslovakia to ignore the contradictions connected to (Soviet) d  t  nte.

2. THE PCF

2.1. *The construction of a taboo*

The taboo regarding the events in Czechoslovakia, which the PCF leadership attempted to construct from late 1968 onwards, involved past as well as ongoing events: the Prague Spring, the invasion, and the "normalization" process. Information on Czechoslovakia was increasingly minimal and attention was diverted to other international events, mainly Vietnam. When events in Czechoslovakia were not tabooed, the interpretations gradually shifted to those provided by the Soviets and by Hus  k's CPCS after April 1969. Illustrative of this was the use of the term "normalization" and the shift in meaning which the PCF accorded to it. Immediately following the invasion, PCF texts had often called for the "normalization" of the situation, but this had always implied the withdrawal of troops at some stage. Increasingly, the use of the term came to coincide with the Soviet one and the issue of the troop presence, and of Soviet interference in Czechoslovakia more generally, was passed over in silence.⁸⁰

In the context of the party's relations with the communist world, the taboo stemmed from the impossibility of combining two things: the agreements with the Soviets, and the party's unwillingness to revise its initial position of disagreement with the invasion. The Soviets insisted on "turning attention to what binds us together rather than what divides us." To be sure, they would have greatly preferred the PCF not to taboo the Czechoslovak question but, rather, openly to shift to its own reading of events, including the "anti-socialist" character of the Prague Spring and the need for a military invasion. Instead, for the sake of the unity, and especially the historical integrity, of the party, the PCF could not revise its initial dissent

over the invasion. Nor did it ever go as far as to judge the Prague Spring as counter-revolutionary. Thus, given its willingness to further comply to Soviet dominance, the non-mentioning of Czechoslovakia became the only solution acceptable to both parties. Furthermore, as the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the dissent continued to cause painful disagreements inside the PCF, the leadership saw no other solution than to silence the affair as far as possible, in an attempt to “get on with things.”

The party press, in its coverage of the “normalization,” attempted to minimize the political problems in Czechoslovakia and to present a picture of unity inside the CPCS and public opinion, omitting the signs of Soviet interference. *Humanité* reported on the political and public unrest that followed the suicide of Palach in the most minimal way.⁸¹ The replacement of Dubček by Husák in mid-April was not reported until 21 April, which expressed embarrassment more than anything else. It was said that the changes at the top of the party had been necessary to mirror the new balance of forces in the CPCS.⁸² After that, the PCF press feigned a belief in an unproblematic convergence of the “normalized” CPCS, public opinion and the Soviets in the reconstruction of the regime. On the first anniversary of the invasion in August 1969, *Humanité* interpreted the political and social unrest as, if not caused, then at least aggravated and exploited, by “anti-Soviet forces.”⁸³ The contradictions of the PCF position were painfully clear from the dry, commentless report by *Humanité* of Husák’s cancelling, on 21 August 1969, of the protest against the invasion which had been communicated by the CPCS Presidium one year earlier.⁸⁴ *Humanité* went as far as to take a neutral tone when relating the invasion.⁸⁵

The PCF leadership was better informed of the unstable political situation in Czechoslovakia and inside its communist party than this minimal coverage suggested. But, once more, perceptions were highly biased. The PCF leadership selected Husák and his allies as its only source of information even before Dubček’s ousting in April 1969. The PCF seems to have had no direct contact whatsoever with Dubček or other former Prague Spring leaders. In mid-April Hentgès presented the leadership with a positive judgement of Husák: he was valued for his “firm attitude” and was expected effectively to combat “anti-socialist forces.”⁸⁶ In late August 1969, the Secretariat discussed the “great difficulties” in the country, noting with worry that in the context of “anti-socialist attacks” the party leadership had only started to take control of the situation.⁸⁷ As to cancelling the anti-invasion communication by Husák in August 1969, the position taken by the

Secretariat internally was ambivalent. On the one hand it was acknowledged that the cancellation of the statement was inevitable, because of the domestic context and the "actual relations between the socialist countries." On the other hand, the cancelling was regarded with worry, as it "tends to justify the invasion." At this point the PCF was highly concerned with not being attacked for the inconsistencies in its position. The only way out of this dilemma, as it was affirmed at the Secretariat meeting in a quasi-explicit way, was to hide behind the argument of non-interference in the affairs of other parties.⁸⁸

The construction of a taboo regarding Czechoslovakia largely failed. It was made impossible by, on the one hand, critics inside the party and on the French Left, and on the other hand pressure from the CPCS, which expected from the PCF greater and overt support. Throughout 1969–1970 the PCF was drawn into a series of incidents and "affairs," which brought up Czechoslovakia in a painful way and kept it at the centre of attention on the French Left. The incidents exposed the internal contradictions and discontinuities of the PCF's attitude towards both the "Prague Spring CPCS" and the "normalized CPCS," and made the party partly compliant in the repression in Czechoslovakia. Not able to break away from its traditional role of *filles aînée*, the PCF in the first instance aspired to influence events in Czechoslovakia for the better through classic means of diplomacy in the communist world. It did so despite the fact that the failure of Rochet's parallel diplomacy had demonstrated its limited influence. When it became clear, especially through the so-called "Kanapa notes" affair, how illusory this was, the party's attitude became a fatal mix of involvement, compliance and willful ignorance. While it occasionally feigned to have a positive impact on the events, on other occasions it withdrew, hiding behind arguments of "non-intervention." Especially after 1969, its "attempts" to ease the repression through influence on the CPCS were void of any significance and motivated by considerations of domestic image.⁸⁹

The "normalized" CPCS exerted tremendous pressure on the PCF throughout 1969–1970 to revise its initial position of disagreement with the invasion, publicly to support the normalization and the repression. It continuously "offered assistance" to the PCF in the interpretation of the current events in the country.⁹⁰ The Czechoslovaks furthermore insisted on "intensifying contact and relations": they proposed the exchange of journalists and experts, the exchange of information on the domestic situations, and a summit meeting after the CPCS congress (for which no date had as then

been scheduled).⁹¹ The PCF resisted the pressure on only two points: it did not revise its initial position of dissent—although it did come close—and it protested against the measures taken against some of the Prague Spring leaders. Direct pressure to support the expulsion of Dubček from the CPCS in July 1970 was exerted via a non-official message from the CPCS to the Bureau politique. The Bureau politique, internally divided on the issue, protested against the expulsion of Dubček—although in a faint way—and restated its disagreement with the invasion. In an attempt not to worsen bilateral relations it did not, however, protest against the measures taken against others or against the repression as a whole.⁹²

The question of how to react to Dubček's exclusion, to the measures taken against him, and to the repression more generally was complicated by the controversy surrounding the "Kanapa notes." The affair demonstrated the extent to which the CPCS was prepared to put pressure on the PCF to make it complicit in the "normalization," and the inability of the latter firmly to resist this. As the episode has been covered in detail elsewhere,⁹³ here I shall only add some elements and point at the wider effects of it on the PCF's realignment. As part of its pressure on the PCF, the CPCS, on the basis of the "Kanapa notes" of the July meeting between Rochet and Dubček, started to criticize the French communists for "a too encouraging attitude" vis-à-vis Dubček during the Prague Spring. It went as far as to blame the French communists for having stimulated Dubček in his resistance against Soviet pressure.⁹⁴ While the PCF initially reacted with reluctance to the request to hand over a copy of the notes, a party delegation, sent by Marchais and Guyot and led by Fajon, went to Prague in late November 1969 to hand over the notes. The PCF leadership afterwards claimed that it had not handed over the notes but had only lent the notes for ten minutes. This explanation was considered unsatisfactory already at the time, and becomes even more unlikely in the light of information from the PCF archives.⁹⁵ When it became clear that the normalisers in the CPCS were planning to use the notes against Dubček, the PCF protested against it and against the repression more generally. However, its public and private campaigns of protest against the repression in Czechoslovakia⁹⁶ turned out to be not only without effect but also motivated solely by a concern for its domestic image. For example, in February 1972 the party sent Fajon to Prague to dissuade Husák from using repressive means. The BP communication that was issued upon his return stated that Husák had given the guarantee that no political trials would occur, and the PCF indeed presented

this as the successful outcome of its intra-communist diplomacy.⁹⁷ These guarantees, however, were afterwards denied by the CPCS, which moreover claimed that at the meeting Fajon had agreed that “a limited number of trials would be necessary.”⁹⁸

The construction of a taboo regarding Czechoslovakia was further made impossible by the responses on the French Left to the publication of the book *L'Aveu* by Artur London in 1969.⁹⁹ The book was a testimony of the Stalinist trial of which the author had been a victim in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s,¹⁰⁰ and painfully revealed the repressive and violent methods that had been used. The book, and the film which was made of it in 1970 by Costa-Gavras, caused great consternation on the French Left. *L'Aveu* came to symbolize the lost dream of “socialism with a human face.” Although the direct effects on PCF membership were probably minimal, on the wider French intellectual and artistic Left *L'Aveu* seriously damaged the image of the PCF. The radical leftists, however, criticized the book for its “liberalism.”¹⁰¹ Generally, as well as recalling the Stalinist trials in Czechoslovakia and in the PCF itself, *L'Aveu* kept the normalization and the actual repression in Czechoslovakia at the centre of attention on the French (intellectual and artistic) Left. This was all the more so when in August 1970, after the book had been circulated clandestinely throughout the country, the CPCS took repressive measures against London. While the party was not willing to support London it was not willing, on the other hand, openly to support the repression in Czechoslovakia. Thus it took no official stance on the issue but was left only with attempts to avoid the worst—namely that London would take part in “anti-communist happenings” in France.¹⁰² As the controversy coincided with the polemics over the Kanapa notes, with the measures in Czechoslovakia against Dubček and with the conflict between a number of communist intellectuals and Marchais (on which more below), it culminated in a general criticism of the PCF and its inconsistent attitude towards the Czechoslovak events.

2.2. The purge in the leadership and party

In the case of the PCF, the aftermath of the Czechoslovak crisis first and foremost signified a turnover in the leadership and the loss of a group of intellectuals. These events within the party will be dealt here with first, before turning to the definition of a new party line. While in the PCI the disciplinary measures were the consequence of the definition of a new line on internationalism, in the PCF the disciplinary measures were, partly, the pre-

condition for the definition of such a new line, as there was much less of a consensus from which to depart. The exclusion of a number of well-known party intellectuals, and the indirect influence of these cases on the party as a whole, grew into an “anti-revisionist” campaign, although the party did not name it as such. It was needed because these intellectuals, more than any other actor on the French Left, refused to taboo Czechoslovakia. By neutralizing its “revisionist intellectuals” the party attempted, partly successfully, to take Czechoslovakia off the political agenda. The turnover at the very top of the party—the gradual and unofficial replacing of Rochet by G. Marchais—was the closing piece of this anti-revisionist campaign.¹⁰³

2.2.1. *The rise of Marchais*

The replacement of Rochet by Marchais was a gradual and largely veiled process. At least from late 1969 onwards Marchais took over most of the everyday tasks of general secretary.¹⁰⁴ It was also largely a hidden process: in a mock procedure Rochet was re-elected as general secretary *in absentia* at the party’s national congress of February 1971. Marchais was not officially elected general secretary before 1972; on this occasion Rochet was nominated honorary president. As a result of the replacement of Rochet, the careful cultural change in the party, characterized by less authoritarian procedures and more intellectual freedom, and the attempts to distance itself from the Soviet Union were blocked up to the mid-1970s. The replacement of Rochet by Marchais did not, however, radically upset the party’s domestic strategy. While the official reason for his replacement was his illness, Rochet needed to be ousted because he had undertaken initiatives that had exposed the contradictions of Soviet internationalism. This had happened not only through the protest against the invasion, but also through his “diplomatic campaign” preceding it. Around 1968, Rochet was developing ideas on internationalism which threatened to break from the PCF’s traditional obedience to the Soviet Union and diverged from some of its basic parameters. The 1965 conflict with the Soviets had already demonstrated the priority he was willing to grant to domestic strategy and the disregard for Soviet strategic interests. Furthermore, in the aftermath of the invasion he seemed to have been ready to engage in an open conflict with the Soviet Communist Party over essential questions of doctrine and strategy.¹⁰⁵ Finally, as we will see below, he had showed an interest in a dynamic understanding of détente and peaceful coexistence, which not only hinted at the contradictions of Soviet détente but also broke with the party’s usual

inability to understand the “global struggle” from any other perspective than a Zhdanovian, bipolar one.

As a consequence of the coming to power of Marchais, discipline was significantly tightened.¹⁰⁶ To some extent the rise to power of Marchais followed up on the old habit of the Soviet Communist Party of nominating the general secretary of the PCF. The hypothesis has always existed that Rochet was set aside under Soviet pressure. Although the presently available sources do not provide clear evidence on this, it is a fact that on several occasions the Soviets showed support for Marchais and, after Czechoslovakia, openly preferred him to Rochet.¹⁰⁷ The 1969 Moscow Conference was a key moment at which Marchais came to the fore: most significantly, the Soviets granted him the honor of presiding over one of the plenary sessions.¹⁰⁸ He was a member of the delegations to all the important international meetings after the invasion of Czechoslovakia and became the regular interlocutor with the Soviet Communist Party and other East European communist parties. Besides, Marchais was able to impose himself as the leader of the party because he had accumulated several official and non-official positions. He was head of the *section cadres*, through which he held a firmer grip over the apparatus than Rochet had done.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, he had come to operate as Guyot’s advisor in the foreign affairs section and was deeply involved in the negotiations with the Socialist Party. Admittedly, in 1968 he still had powerful opponents in the central leadership, notably Leroy and to a lesser extent Frachon, while Kanapa held very different views on internationalism than he did.¹¹⁰ However, he was crucially allied with Fajon and Plissonnier,¹¹¹ while conservative members such as Guyot and Duclos were willing to support him because they expected he would put an end to some of the liberalizations of the Rochet era.

2.2.2. *The purging of “revisionist” intellectuals*

Disagreement with the realignment of the PCF—the internal realignment, the realignment with the Soviet Union and the taboo on Czechoslovakia—was widespread in the party, especially among its intellectuals. Their continued protest against it led the central leadership to exclude from the party a number of well-known communist intellectuals. The purges took place despite the fact that the so-called Champigny program, laid down by the Central Committee meeting of December 1968, granted considerable attention to the role of intellectuals. In an attempt to respond to the events of May 1968 and to include in its strategy a wider group of intellectuals, the

concept of the “communist intellectual” was expanded to non-party members and to students.¹¹² However, in practice the party entered into a spiral of increasing doctrinal and intellectual rigidity. In those cases where disciplinary measures were not taken, the threat of these was enough to make many intellectuals censor themselves.¹¹³

The tension that had existed since May 1968 between the leadership and the intellectuals developed into an open crisis in 1969–1970.¹¹⁴ The editor of *Democratie nouvelle*, P. Noirot, attempted to provoke critical discussions on Czechoslovakia and the socialist regimes. A special issue of *Democratie nouvelle* on Czechoslovakia was censored, notably under pressure from Denis and Duclos, in mid-October 1968.¹¹⁵ A storm of protest from communist intellectuals was the result: close to 300 communist intellectuals signed a petition in support of Noirot. The latter set up a new journal, *Politique aujourd’hui*, in which more critical analyses of the socialist regimes were developed.¹¹⁶ From November 1968 onwards, the Bureau politique and *Humanité* condemned the journal.¹¹⁷ Noirot was excluded from the party following a vote in his cell, inside which the situation was manipulated by the BP.¹¹⁸ The cell of Sorbonne-Lettres excluded writer P. Rozenberg and historian M. Rebérioux.¹¹⁹ The exclusion of Garaudy from the party in early 1970 was the most flagrant case in the purge. After his disagreement with the majority of the Bureau politique, which became evident immediately following the invasion, Garaudy continued to pressure towards a more critical distance vis-à-vis the socialist regimes. *Humanité* reacted sharply to the preface of Garaudy’s book edited in October 1968, *La liberté en sursis*, in which he referred to the Prague Spring as a model for the PCF and argued for a new involvement of intellectuals in party politics.¹²⁰ At the Central Committee meeting of October 1968, Garaudy denounced the retreat of the party before Soviet pressure: he argued for a more active policy of support of the CPCS and for a more assertive point of departure for the PCF delegation in view of the upcoming meeting with the Soviets. He was censured and agreed to submit to party discipline.¹²¹

While he disagreed with the “party line” on several issues, it was the combination of this with his continued disagreement on Czechoslovakia and his reference to socialist regimes other than Soviet-style ones that provoked his expulsion.¹²² In August 1969 Garaudy gave an interview for the journal *Kommunist*, organ of the Yugoslav League of Communists. In this interview, under the title “Centralisme bureaucratique ou autogestion,” he criticized the Soviet and Czechoslovak communist parties, disagreed with

the position taken by the PCF on the Moscow Conference, criticized the PCF for its analysis of the May events and suggested a positive evaluation of Titoism.¹²³ It brought him another reprimand from the Bureau politique, which he did not accept. Instead, he argued in a letter to the Bureau politique that "we can no longer be silent [on the repression in Czechoslovakia], as silence becomes complicity."¹²⁴ In his book *Le grand tournant du socialisme*, which was published in late 1969, and at the 19th National Party Congress of February 1970, he reiterated his views on domestic strategy. These were centered around the need to bring about a "historic bloc" and to focus on some of the issues brought up by the student movements. The Central Committee ratified his expulsion in May 1970.¹²⁵

The party leadership must surely have realized that the Garaudy case was not an isolated one but, instead, connected to wider problems regarding intellectual freedom, pluralism, and how to relate to the socialist regimes. The general crisis in the party and the negative responses coming from party intellectuals, from the wider party ranks, and from the socialists after the second measure against Garaudy, amply demonstrated this. The Secretariat noted: "It seems that the party as a whole is satisfied with the work of the Central Committee. Which does not mean that there is no hesitation among certain comrades, among them intellectuals. This is mainly to do with Czechoslovakia."¹²⁶

Once expelled, Garaudy continued to pose a problem to party unity *   la* Marchais. He did so because of his influence among intellectuals in the party, and because he continued to point at the inconsistencies in the PCF's policy in the Czechoslovak crisis. The PCF attempted, largely unsuccessfully, to isolate him in France and internationally.¹²⁷ In the summer of 1970, a number of critical communist intellectuals carried out a joint attack on Marchais. Garaudy accused him of involvement in the repression in Czechoslovakia in relation to the Kanapa notes affair. Together with renowned communists such as Charles Tillon and Jean Pronteau, he published the text *Il n'est plus possible de se taire*, which implicitly brought up Marchais's war record. Furthermore, in an article published in the non-communist press Tillon revealed what many knew but had not dared to make public, namely, that Marchais had signed up for voluntary work in Germany during the Second World War and that, upon his adherence to the PCF, he had falsified his biography.¹²⁸ Tillon, a former Resistance member enjoying widespread prestige, had already undergone disciplinary measures in the 1950s but had been "re-established in his rights and

tasks.”¹²⁹ In 1969 Tillon voiced increasingly openly his unwillingness to accept the taboo on Czechoslovakia. The dossier against him included an appeal to the party which asked for a formal condemnation of the “normalization” in Czechoslovakia, and the publication of a book, *Un procès de Moscou à Paris*, which revealed some of the authoritarian methods in the PCF. He was excluded in July 1970.¹³⁰

The communist parties of the Soviet Union and East Germany exerted pressure on the PCF in connection to the cases of the “revisionist” intellectuals. The SED closely followed Garaudy’s positions from 1966 onwards: in its report of the Argenteuil Central Committee meeting of 1966, Garaudy’s “deviating analyses” were highlighted.¹³¹ According to the SED, Garaudy was organizing an international grouping of “modern revisionists,” supposedly including Prague Spring leaders Pelikán and Šik, the Austrian communists E. Fischer and F. Marek, and the Italian communist intellectual L. Lombardo Radice. The East Germans considered the PCF’s struggle against Garaudy, Noirot and Tillon as “not consistent enough.” Only after the measures against Garaudy did the SED consider the PCF to have “finally developed a theoretical argumentation against revisionism.”¹³² Furthermore, the conflict between the Soviet-oriented line in the PCF on the one hand and the critical intellectuals on the other, led to the eventual closure of *Les lettres françaises* in 1972. Despite their continued solidarity with the (former) Czechoslovak reformers, the writers of *Les lettres françaises* were initially spared from outright repression, although they did undergo psychological pressure through isolation. This was aggravated when Aragon wrote a positive review of *L’Aveu* in LLF, and described the ongoing repression in Czechoslovakia in the foreword of the French translation of M. Kundera’s *The Joke* as “a Biafra of the spirit.” As a result, the Soviets ended their subscriptions to LLF and the financial problems thus inflicted on the journal were fatal.¹³³

The neutralization of the critical intellectuals in the party marked a break with the brief era of relative intellectual freedom in 1965–1968. In a general sense, it was the result of both the May ’68 events and the Czechoslovak crisis, as the party leadership considered it necessary to avoid an open discussion regarding some of the contradictions of the party’s new internationalist and domestic line. These contradictions lie not only in the obvious discrepancy between the rhetoric on party autonomy on the one hand and the enduring influence of the Soviet Communist Party over the PCF on the other. Contradictions also arose from the party’s use of old and inadequate

concepts of revolution and socialism, revealed through the Czechoslovak crisis as well as through the May '68 events, and from the unwillingness to question whether Soviet strategy in Europe was a constructive back-up to the PCF's domestic strategy. As these were not only political but also theoretical and intellectual problems, it was necessary to avoid a profound theoretical Marxist investigation. The fact that intellectuals were targeted specifically was to do with the traditional influence which intellectuals had on the PCF and from their recently acquired relative intellectual freedom. The neutralization of the critical intellectuals was also the result of the Czechoslovak crisis in a more specific sense: as these intellectuals had taken up the defense of the critical writers in Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring, they had in most cases identified themselves with the "liberal" strand of the domestic criticism in Czechoslovakia. The exclusion of the "revisionist" intellectual tradition permitted the PCF, from 1970 onwards, to reconstruct a new Marxist theory and dogma, which claimed to respond to both "revisionism" and "leftism." While this was influenced by the Prague Spring (for example in its attempt to reconsider pluralism in socialist society without, however, giving up the doctrine of the leading role of the communist party) and by the student movements (for example in its attention to the structures of knowledge), it did not fundamentally raise the complex questions posed by both movements regarding the nature of socialism.¹³⁴

2.3. *"Historical internationalism" and the question of revolution*

The realignment of the PCF in terms of an internationalist and domestic party line was a more difficult process than in the case of the PCI, and lasted up to 1970. The changes in the PCF's internationalism were less visible, less far-reaching and less coherent than in the case of the PCI. Rather than offering new solutions, they brought to the fore the deeper-lying problems connected to Soviet-aligned internationalism in the West European context. The changes which the PCF's internationalism underwent as a consequence of the Czechoslovak crisis were, as in the case of the PCI, the result of a problematic relation to the regimes of "really existing socialism." In the PCF case, the problem was related to the conception of the world communist movement and rules of interaction, and to strategy, rather than to doctrine. In an attempt to cover this up, the internationalism of the PCF shifted to what can be called "historical internationalism": the PCF increasingly identified itself with the historical world communist movement and the historical Soviet Union, rather than with the actual world communist movement and the actual socialist regimes.¹³⁵

2.3.1. *The shift to historical internationalism*

At its Central Committee meeting of December 1968, held in Champigny, and further at the party's 19th Congress in February 1970, the PCF aimed to re-establish a coherent party line on domestic strategy and internationalism. While it presented this line as a response to both the May '68 events and the Czechoslovak crisis, the crux of the matter was that it attempted to avoid responding to the deeper-lying questions brought up by both events. Generally, attention was shifted away from internationalism and towards domestic strategy. The PCF's internationalism was increasingly connected back to the October Revolution, Leninism and the founding of the Soviet state, and disconnected from the actual Soviet Communist Party and its leaders. To be sure, in practice the PCF continued to maintain strong ties with Brezhnev's Soviet Union. However, the reasons justifying these relations were increasingly less to do with the nature of the (actual) socialist regimes or their strategy, and more to do with the historical significance of the Soviet state and its communist party and the need to belong to the historical movement that it headed. This shift was the result of a problematic relation with the actual socialist regimes in terms of global and European strategy, which had become evident in the first instance through Soviet support for de Gaulle in 1965 and in the second instance through the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The shift towards historical internationalism made a somewhat critical evaluation of the socialist regimes possible. As in the PCI, limited forms of criticism of the socialist regimes were made acceptable by the PCF leadership. Czechoslovakia had led the PCF leadership to understand that the adoption of at least a minimal form of criticism was required in terms of its domestic position and in view of its domestic alliance strategy. The existence of a number of "problems" and "mistakes" of the socialist regimes was now admitted. A critical argument on the development of the Soviet Union and the socialist regimes was expounded as a way to both contextualize and justify these problems. In his book *L'Avenir du Parti communiste français*, published in 1969 as an elaboration of the Champigny line, Rochet made explicit the conditions on which criticism of the socialist regimes could be made. They were very similar to those in the case of the PCI, although generally the language used was more compliant.¹³⁶ There was, however, one major difference in comparison to the PCI: 1917 remained entirely intact as a myth, and indeed became a revived point of reference. The Bolshevik Revolution and Lenin were invoked, rather than more recent Soviet or WCM texts, to illustrate (and justify) the diversity of roads to

socialism, the possibility of a peaceful transition, the autonomy of communist parties and other issues central to the party's domestic strategy.¹³⁷

Verdès-Leroux has referred to the analysis of the socialist regimes after 1968 carried out by the PCF and its intellectuals as "moral poly-linguism": while on the one hand criticism was often expressed of isolated cases, on the other hand the general positive qualities of the regimes were always reaffirmed.¹³⁸ This can be explained through the intensified relationship with the historical CPSU: the actual Soviet Union, despite its shortcomings, had the ultimate benefit of being the sole heir to Lenin. The revolution of 1917 remained the first and crucial historical event in the development towards the break-up of world capitalism—and the Soviet Union represented this. As did the PCI, the PCF retreated into a relativist position in terms of the conception of socialism and the evaluation of the socialist states. The thesis that "communist experiences could not be exported and should not be copied blindly"¹³⁹ suggested the limited relevance of the experiences of "really existing socialism" to the French road to socialism. It reflected an unwillingness to value the actual socialist regimes in absolute terms, on the grounds of principle or with reference to the definition of socialism. The retreat into relativism in terms of doctrine was not, as in the case of the PCI, a cover-up for a fundamental disagreement with the socialist regimes regarding doctrine. As the reception of the Prague Spring in the PCF has demonstrated, it was not that the PCF unambiguously favored a different, more democratic and more pluralist type of socialism. Rather, the PCF's concept of socialism was vague, incoherent and subject to contradictory domestic pressures. While the *gauchistes* identified themselves with more revolutionary socialist models, the reformist Left proposed a more pluralist and mixed type of socialism. It was these domestic pressures which made the party develop relativist criticism of the socialist regimes rather than clear points of reference as to what socialism should be.

The fact that no more significant changes occurred after 1968 regarding the organization of the world communist movement was due largely to the fact that the party's theoretical arsenal did not include alternatives to the classic centralist conception of it. This sharply contrasted to the PCI's development since 1956 of concepts such as polycentrism, *allargamento* and dynamic *détente*. As we have seen, the PCF had a history of reluctance to accept the Soviet strategy of peaceful coexistence and had done so, ultimately, only as a matter of obedience. After 1969 the PCF, generally, displayed little interest in *détente* beyond the obligatory rhetoric. In 1969

Rochet attempted to spell out the problems connected to the “static” dimensions of Soviet strategy in Europe, at the same time, in PCI fashion, aiming at making a more “dynamic” concept of détente acceptable to the hostile elements in the leadership and the party. In *L’Avenir*, while explaining the meaning of peaceful coexistence and emphasizing once more that it did not imply the acceptance of the status quo, Rochet referred to Lenin rather than to the actual Soviet leadership. Most significantly, and against official WCM guidelines, he went on to argue that peaceful coexistence did not apply to the workers’ movement in the capitalist world. He did admit that peaceful coexistence “indirectly but strongly” favored this latter movement, in that it created the circumstances in which large groups of the population could be mobilized in favor of peace and against American imperialism.¹⁴⁰ The argument was not convincing: Rochet here seemed to admit that this last point was the only benefit of peaceful coexistence to the French situation and did not raise the question as to how it would further help socialism in the West to come about.¹⁴¹

The problem with détente was that it did not fit into the PCF’s still essentially Manichean world-view. It was hard for the party to change this world-view, because it was closely connected to its domestic sources of legitimation: anti-Americanism, France’s sovereignty in the Cold War context, and anti-German feelings. Thus, lacking a view of dynamic détente, the PCF came to endorse, out of discipline, the static Soviet view on East–West relations. There was a wide gap between Rochet’s (meager) attempt to introduce a dynamic concept of détente, and the shift undertaken in 1969 by Soviet-loyalist leaders such as Marchais and Guyot towards acceptance of the defensive Soviet strategy in Europe. Perfectly in line with Soviet and WCM analyses, the PCF at this point developed a pessimistic analysis of the “balance of forces” in Europe and perceived the need for a defensive strategy of “preserving what has been won.” Guyot, in a report on the international situation prepared for and discussed by the Bureau politique in January 1969, went as far as to argue that NATO, the United States and West Germany were preparing a war.¹⁴² There was a new emphasis on the “offensive strategy” undertaken by capitalism and on the need for a cautious policy in response to this. The call which was made for the “joint action of all pacifist forces against German militarism and against NATO”¹⁴³, and, more generally, the revival of anti-German discourses, lay in line with Soviet rhetoric in this phase but also, as we have seen, followed from the PCF’s suspicions regarding *Ostpolitik* since 1967.

Peaceful coexistence in Europe was, in this report, explicitly identified with the foreign policy of the socialist states. Other sectors of the world communist movement, such as the workers' movement in the West and the liberation movements in the Third World, were considered largely dependent on this first sector. The PCF expressed itself in favor of the simultaneous dissolution of the blocs. However, the PCF did not, as the PCI did for Italy, favor a neutralist position for France. This followed from the traditional communist aversion for neutralism: because, according to the official analysis, the dissolution of the blocs would lead to the passage to socialism, it made no sense to talk of neutralism.¹⁴⁴ In reality, of course, neutralism was potentially dangerous, as a neutralist centre of power could attract renegades from the Soviet-dominated world. Furthermore, the PCF became one of the main promoters of the Soviet proposal for a conference of European peoples for peace and security. Most importantly, PCF texts now, more clearly than before 1968, emphasized that the party was against the *force de frappe* and in favor of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.¹⁴⁵ In doing so, the party gave up one of the few elements by which, in the mid-1960s, it had carefully opposed Soviet strategy in Europe. The adoption of the Guyot report and, more generally, the turnover in the PCF leadership marked the temporary end of the PCF's cautious attempts during the Rochet era to mould internationalism and European strategy on its own (domestic) needs.

The party's relationship to the normalization in Czechoslovakia, as well as its attitude to the Moscow Conference, demonstrated how the party continued to shift between a position of autonomy, non-interference and relativism on the one hand, and an ideal-conception of a strongly united communist world on the other. This was characteristic of the basic contradiction in the PCF's internationalism after 1969. On the one hand, in line with its shift to historical internationalism, an ideal-vision of a coherent and united world communist movement was cultivated. The ideal-conception was of a grouping of tightly connected communist parties, equal to each other and mutually dependent on one another. This conception of communist world unity was strongly emphasized in PCF documents after the Czechoslovak crisis, and it was always, as for example in *L'Avenir* by Rochet, the counterbalance to statements regarding autonomy.¹⁴⁶ Admittedly, the PCF now, more openly than before the Czechoslovak crisis, acknowledged that disagreements existed in terms of domestic strategy (not European or global strategy). However, it was always affirmed that these did not need to hinder unity, as the interests of all communist parties "objectively coincided."

The crux of the matter was that underneath the apparent congruence with Soviet foreign policy lay a well-perceived conflict of interests and strategy. While the crises of 1965 (de Gaulle) and 1968 (Czechoslovakia) led the PCF leadership to understand that it should best be the sole judge of its domestic strategy, the erratic evaluations by the Soviets of the PCF's May '68 strategy demonstrated the limited interest of the former in communist strategy in the West. It was this understanding, never made explicit, which led the party to shift its full attention towards a national strategy based on a broad Left alliance.¹⁴⁷ The insistence on communist party autonomy and on state sovereignty was, after 1969, the only visible remnant of the understanding of this strategic problem.¹⁴⁸

2.3.2. *Revolution and the domestic program*

The deeper-lying reason behind the PCF's shift to an intensified identification with the Bolshevik Revolution and Leninism was to do with the question of revolution and the crisis on the French Left after May 1968. Some of the established political and ideological concepts of the French Left disintegrated as a result of the political and societal crisis of 1968. This crystallized around the break-up of the classic concept of revolution. Not only the PCF, but the French Left as a whole had, until 1968, connected its concept of revolution not only to 1789 but also to 1917, although in different ways and to different extents. Parts of the student movements and the new Left had raised possibilities of radically different concepts of revolution, which did not directly relate to "really existing socialism." They diverted the crisis of the 1789–1917 concept of revolution away from a questioning of this concept and towards attacks on the agent of revolution, namely the communist party. The 1789–1917 concept of revolution itself only became subject to fundamental questioning from the mid-1970s onwards.¹⁴⁹

In the political struggle after May 1968, there was a need for political parties and groups to present themselves with a clear identity and a convincing revolutionary project. The parties on the Left were in a state of crisis in 1969: while the socialist parties SFIO and FGDS collapsed after the May 1968 events, the new and far leftist groups found themselves with a severe identity crisis.¹⁵⁰ The PCF was isolated and challenged especially by the PSU, which presented itself as more revolutionary and at the same time more contemporary. In this context, the PCF needed to emphasize its revolutionary character, as this was its central source of legitimation. Moreover, it needed to propose a *specific* concept of revolution, of which it could

claim patronage. Through this specific concept and program it could demonstrate its different identity both with respect to the challengers from the far Left and with respect to reformism. The crux of the criticism addressed by the PSU and the *gauchistes* to the PCF and the Soviet Union remained the question of their non-revolutionary character. Furthermore, after the May 1968 events and the Czechoslovak crisis, the PCF was determined to develop a fairly classic political alliance with the Socialist Party, in the tradition of the Popular Front strategy.

All this led the PCF to seek refuge in its traditional concept of revolution. Thus, revolution became once more the dominant source of legitimation for the PCF—albeit a fragile one in the context of new forms of radicalism. The attempts to place revolution at the centre of the PCF's identity had started (in the late 1950s) with the crisis of anti-imperialism and anti-fascism. Furthermore, emphasizing its own revolutionary character for the PCF meant taking up the full defense of the revolutionary character of the Soviet Union. In order to avoid complex questions on this issue—which in the PCF had been raised internally in 1956 with the onset of peaceful co-existence and again in 1965 and in 1968—attention was shifted to the 1789–1917 tradition. The identification with 1917 rather than with Soviet politics in the Brezhnev era demonstrates that the PCF itself was no longer convinced of the revolutionary character of the actual Soviet state, or at least not to the extent that it was capable of building a strong argument on it.

The PCF's new domestic program, adopted at the CC meeting held in Champigny in December 1968, *Pour une d  mocratie avanc  e, pour une France socialiste*, was an attempt to reconcile an increased emphasis on revolution and on the teleology on the one hand, and a resolute choice for integration in the institutional and party system through political alliances on the other. Next to an increased revolutionary discourse, it also featured revived attacks on social democracy and reformism. This was not solely a matter of rhetoric and an attempt to dissimulate a reformist strategy. It was a reconnection to the classic Leninist strategy for communist parties in pluralist environments.¹⁵¹ The French road to socialism featured a number of markedly Leninist elements, including the leading role of the communist party. The principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat was not dropped from the party documents, despite at least Kanapa's willingness to do so.¹⁵² Most significantly, there was a reaffirmation of the existence of general laws on the road to socialism and universally valid characteristics of socialism itself. As, before 1968, the PCF texts had often remained rather vague

about this, this was a significant step back into monolithism. However, once more these laws and characteristics were brought into connection with 1917 and in an abstract way, rather than with the actual socialist regimes. Rochet listed these laws in *L'Avenir* as:¹⁵³

- the seizure of political power by the working class in alliance with the peasants
- the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat—the working class and its allies hold power and extend democracy to all of the people
- the abolition of capitalist property and the organization of the basic means of production into common property; the gradual transformation of agriculture
- the construction of a socialist planned economy, with the elevation of the living conditions of the workers and the active participation of large groups into the managing of the economy
- international solidarity of the working classes
- the need for a Marxist-Leninist party which would genuinely assume the role of revolutionary vanguard of the working classes

This program was roughly a continuation of the party's policies since the mid-1960s, and through which it attempted to become a government candidate. The crux of the strategy remained a political alliance with the Socialist Party, despite the latter's enduring crisis. The first phase, the establishment of an "advanced democracy," included reformist action, especially through parliament and the trade union movement, in order to carry out social and economic reforms.¹⁵⁴ The second phase was a political one and would lead to the seizure of power by the Left alliance and to the temporary establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. While the "advanced democracy" concept was very similar to the previous concept of "genuine democracy," it was meant to stress the further development towards socialism rather than merely the democratization of the existing regime. One innovation concerned pluralism: while the vanguard role of the party was reaffirmed, it was argued that the party needed to "merit" this role among the masses through its actions, rather than that it would come about mechanically. Furthermore, a point was made regarding the existence of non-communist parties of the Left, such as the Socialist Party, on the road to socialism as well as "for a certain period of time" after the seizure of power. An immediate fusion of the

parties and groups of the Left was explicitly rejected in order not to antagonize the socialists. These (limited) innovations regarding pluralism were the only direct and tangible influence of the Czechoslovak crisis and the (limited) Prague Spring debate on the PCF's domestic program.

In the short term, the PCF benefited from this choice to maintain its traditional concept of revolution. Only in the longer term did it come to pay the full price for anachronistically keeping alive this concept in a context of rapid societal change and political restructuring. However anachronistic this concept of revolution, and however alienated from the recent domestic changes, it did provide the party with a response to the criticism of the PCF expressed by the PSU and the radical Left in terms of revolutionary appeal. Moreover, the party benefited from the fact that the image of the Soviet Union among French intellectuals and public opinion generally did not significantly deteriorate before 1975. As argued by Grémion, the Soviet Union in the early 1970s, despite Czechoslovakia, continued to represent a fairly positive example of modernization and progress.¹⁵⁵ To the PCF, therefore, there was little interest in weakening its symbolic relation to the Soviet Union. Again, it was easier to convince the French public of the progressive and modernist nature of the *historical* Soviet Union than of the actual Brezhnev regime.

The party also benefited from the continued chaotic and dispersed situation on the French Left. While the socialist parties SFIO and FGSD had collapsed after the May '68 events, the PSU, although successfully presenting itself at once as more revolutionary and more modern than the PCF, remained a very small party.¹⁵⁶ After the rejection by referendum of the Fauré law for the reform of education and the law on regional reform in late April 1969, de Gaulle stepped back and presidential elections were called. As the election campaign was marked by sharp competition on the Left rather than collaboration, it raised the matter of a clearly defined revolutionary identity to a level of urgency. As no joint Left candidate was proposed, the PCF presented the oldest member of its BP, J. Duclos, thereby once more choosing to refer to its historical traditions. Duclos's unexpected success—21 per cent in the first round, after the Gaullist candidate Pompidou and the centrist Poher—was due, alongside the appeal of these traditions, to the party's clear-cut choice to present itself as the crux of a possible future Left alliance. As the centre-left candidate Defferre polled only 5 per cent and the other leftist candidates each less than 4 per cent, the PCF was, despite Czechoslovakia, reaffirmed as the most stable and well-organized force on the Left.¹⁵⁷

The PCF was, at the time of the elections, still engaged in the Marchais-led process of realignment, closely followed in Moscow. Its position in the elections illustrated the extent to which it was being realigned on Soviet positions in terms of strategy, in comparison to 1965. In the second round of the elections, which opposed the Gaullist candidate G. Pompidou to the centrist candidate A. Poher, the PCF called upon its voters to abstain from voting. The fact that it chose not to make Poher win was undoubtedly to do with the priority granted to Soviet foreign policy interests: while Pompidou had announced he would continue de Gaulle's foreign policy, Poher had a more pro-Atlantic program.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, in the first months of Pompidou's presidency, the PCF undertook a propaganda campaign against the *force de frappe* and decided to avoid discussing the issue of French neutralism, which was considered "an element of confusion in our struggle for the dissolution of the blocs and the organization of European security." With both positions, the party was perfectly in line with Moscow.¹⁵⁹

In summary, the question of revolution remained an unresolved problem to the party in two ways. Firstly, it was not clear where the revolutionary dimension was to be found, beyond rhetoric and symbols, in a *de facto* reformist domestic strategy. An ambivalence similar to the one which characterized the Champigny program was displayed here: while the perspective was a fairly classic alliance with the Socialist Party, the discourse was highly anti-reformist and anti-social democratic. Although in terms of communist doctrine there was, strictly speaking, no contradiction in this, it did make clear that the PCF had not escaped the dilemma of reconciling Leninism with pluralism. Secondly, it had become painfully clear in 1965 and 1968 that it was by no means certain whether this strategy was supported by the Soviet Union and the international movement led by it. Spelling this out, however, would have meant questioning the revolutionary character of these states—unthinkable to the PCF.

NOTES

- 1 An example of the latter case is Kriegel, "The International Role," p. 49–53.
- 2 See, for example, Blackmer, "Change and Continuity," pp. 61–63; and more recently Pons, "L'URSS e il PCI," pp. 30–31.
- 3 Gruppi, S., "Cecoslovacchia: Manifestazioni a Praga dopo una vittoria sportiva," *Unità*, 31/3/69.
- 4 S.G., "Documento a Praga del Presidium del Partito comunista: Richiamo ai Cecoslovacchi sulla gravità della situazione," *Unità*, 3/4/69.

- 5 "Comunicato dell'Ufficio politico," 18/4/69, in APCI, UP, 18/4/69, 2370. The PCI censored itself by referring to the "substitution" of Dubček rather than his ousting, for which it was strongly criticized by the Socialist Party. Declaration by Orlando in APCI, Estero 1969: Cecoslovacchia, 0308–0684.
- 6 Most of the reports referred to below were not read or discussed in the Direzione, but only in the Ufficio politico; this went counter to usual party workings and was another sign of the conscious construction of the taboo.
- 7 "Nota sulle conversazioni a Roma 24–25/1/69 con direttore della rivista Politika di Praga, Alois Svoboda," Pecorari, 29/1/68, APCI, Estero 1969: Cecoslovacchia, 0383–0636.
- 8 "Nota sulla situazione in Cecoslovacchia—informazione ricevuta 5/3 da Svoboda—Riservato," s.n. (but most probably Pecorari), s.d., APCI, Estero 1969: Cecoslovacchia, 0308–0648–0652.
- 9 "Nota sulla conversazione avuta il 4 febbraio col cp. J.P. (dopo un viaggio a Praga)," Pecorari, s.d., APCI, Estero 1969: Cecoslovacchia, 0308, 0643–0646.
- 10 Pelikán furthermore asked the PCI not to set aside the Czechoslovak affair and other controversial problems such as China. "Nota sulla Cecoslovacchia—informazione da J.Pe. dopo conversazione da lui con altri compagni responsabili in Praga," Pecorari, s.d. (but April), APCI, Estero 1969: Cecoslovacchia, 0308–0653–0659.
- 11 "Alcune altre notizie," in "Incontro tra Bilák e Pajetta, Sandri 29/4/69," s.n., APCI, Estero 1969: Cecoslovacchia, 0308–0696–0700.
- 12 "Info sulla situazione in Cecoslovacchia da un membro del Presidium del PCC ad un gruppo ristretto di quadri," Pecorari, 5/5/69, APCI, Estero 1969: Cecoslovacchia, 0308–0704–0710.
- 13 "Riservato: Conversazione con Jaroslav Novak—Accademia delle Scienze, candidato al CC," Pecorari, Roma, 9/8/69, APCI, Estero 1969: Cecoslovacchia, 0308–0778.
- 14 "Strettamente confidenziale—nota informazione sulla situazione in Cecoslovacchia," Moranino, F., 10/7/69, APCI, Estero 1969: Cecoslovacchia, 0308–0755.
- 15 Husák to PCI, 14/5/69 (translation into Italian), APCI, Estero 1969: Cecoslovacchia, 0308–0715–0718. It is correct that PCI material was being distributed clandestinely, but it is difficult to reconstruct the dimensions of this. See also some indication of this in Jilek, "La Tchécoslovaquie et son Parti communiste face à l'Eurocommunisme," pp. 71–81.
- 16 The PCI replied to the letter by sending its last CC resolutions and by proposing a bilateral meeting. Longo (Direzione PCI) to Presidium CPCs, 27/5/69, APCI, Estero 1969: Cecoslovacchia, 0308–0719.
- 17 Bilák claimed that there was a consensus among the "orthodox" communist parties to ostracize the PCI for three months at least. Discussion between Bilák and a certain "ZT," reported by the latter to an anonymous informant of the PCI. It was also reported here that, while Cunhal of the Portuguese CP also demanded an immediate campaign against revisionism in Western communism, Marchais of the PCF abstained from expressing a judgement on the PCI. "Strettamente confidenziale: nota con informazione sul colloquio avuto col cmp. Z.T. a Praga 27/6/69," APCI, Estero 1969: Cecoslovacchia, 0308–0761.

- 18 The first, also known as *Servire il popolo*, was founded in Rome in October 1968. More detail on the far-Left groups in Italy in this period, in: Flores, De Bernardi, *Il sessantotto*, pp. 227–233.
- 19 This last one was the analysis by Pajetta, who added that there was a general problem of party loyalty and widespread reluctance to defend the party line against criticisms. APCI, Dir, 30/1/69, 006–1166.
- 20 Report by Natta on the situation in the party in APCI, Dir, 30/1/69, 006–1158–1160. Also Berlinguer, during his meeting with the Soviets in late January (see below), reported on the problems inside the party: “Incontro PCUS 21 gennaio 69,” s.n. (notes Berlinguer), APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 70.
- 21 Rossanda was a former partisan; she had been an MP between 1963 and 1968 and was responsible for Cultural Affairs in the CC. For the positions of Rossanda and others of the Left on the 12th Congress, see also Grazia, *Da Natta a Natta*, pp. 28–31.
- 22 APCI, CC-CCC, 16–18/10/68, 00418.
- 23 APCI, CC-CCC, 16–18/10/68, 00416.
- 24 APCI, CC-CCC, 16–18/10/68, 00423.
- 25 Report (notes) of this meeting by Berlinguer: “Incontro PCUS 21 gennaio 69,” APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 70.
- 26 Berlinguer’s international experience as leader of the World Federation of Democratic Youth seems to have been determining in his election as successor to Longo, rather than Napolitano who had fulfilled the function of vice-general secretary for three years. According to Fiori, the choice of Berlinguer as vice-general secretary was made at a meeting of the Ufficio politico in December 1968. Longo, who had been ill since October, wished to assure his succession and strongly supported Berlinguer. Fiori, *Vita di Berlinguer*, pp. 177–179. According to Ingrao, he and Amendola had already agreed in 1966–1967 not to have ambitions regarding the function of general secretary, supporting Berlinguer instead. Ingrao, *Le cose impossibili*, pp. 167–168.
- 27 “XII congresso nazionale. Il dibattito,” pp. 197–198.
- 28 “XII congresso nazionale. Il dibattito,” pp. 191–192.
- 29 This has also been noted by Amyot, *The Italian Communist Party*, p. 179.
- 30 A similar point is made in Pons, “La politica internazionale.”
- 31 For example in “Tesi: IV. Le vie e le forme nuove dell’unità del movimento operaio internazionale,” in (PCI, ed.) *Da Gramsci a Berlinguer*, p. 240.
- 32 “Tesi: IV,” pp. 241.
- 33 “Tesi: IV,” p. 238.
- 34 “Tesi: IV,” p. 239.
- 35 “Tesi: IV,” p. 239.
- 36 See also the argument on the disconnection between the positive appreciation of Europe and the negative appreciation of NATO after 1968, in Pons, “La politica internazionale.”
- 37 Longo, “Il PCI di fronte ai problemi nuovi,” in (PCI, ed.) *Da Gramsci a Berlinguer*, pp. 168–169.
- 38 Another example of these attempts to have its internationalism accepted by the WCM was be found in a note which the PCI leadership sent to Moscow on “our

- European policy,” in which it reaffirmed the continuation of its policy of détente, its positive evaluation of European integration, and its concept of a “widest possible” Europe as a strategy towards the “overcoming of the blocs.” “Nota su nostra politica europeistica,” s.d., s.n., APCI, Estero, URSS, 058–891.
- 39 Berlinguer, “Costruire una nuova unità internazionalista,” in (PCI, ed.) *Da Gramsci a Berlinguer*, p. 210.
- 40 These points were most clearly listed in Berlinguer, “Costruire una nuova unità internazionalista,” pp. 215–216.
- 41 For a similar point in the case of the PCF see Lavau, “L’URSS et eux...,” p. 190.
- 42 “Tesi: I. La crisi del mondo di oggi,” in (PCI, ed.) *Da Gramsci a Berlinguer*, p. 226.
- 43 “Incontro PCUS 21 gennaio 69,” s.n. (notes Berlinguer), APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 70.
- 44 Berlinguer, “Costruire una nuova unità internazionalista,” p. 214.
- 45 Berlinguer, “Costruire una nuova unità internazionalista,” p. 220.
- 46 Occhetto in particular emphasised this. “XII congresso nazionale. Il dibattito,” in (PCI, ed.) *Da Gramsci a Berlinguer*, pp. 195–196.
- 47 The “historical bloc” did constitute changes with respect to the old alliance strategy, for instance in the fact that the former granted more attention to alliances with non-party groups. See Amyot, *The Italian Communist Party*, p. 178.
- 48 “Tesi: II. La costruzione di un’alternativa al centro-sinistra,” in PCI, ed., *Da Gramsci a Berlinguer*, pp. 226–237.
- 49 A similar argument is developed in Graziani, *Nei punti alti*, p. 44.
- 50 For this argument on the use of Gramscian ideas in official PCI doctrine in this period, see Flores, Gallerano, *Sul PCI*, pp. 196–203.
- 51 As mentioned in chapter 3, the SPD from 1969 onwards abstained from further requesting the assistance of the PCI in its contacts with Eastern Germany.
- 52 *Unità*, 12/3/69.
- 53 APCI, Dir, 16/4/69, 006–1413–1415.
- 54 APCI, Dir, 16/4/69, 006–1409.
- 55 APCI, Dir, 16/4/69, 006–1417–1418.
- 56 APCI, Dir, 7–8/5/69, 006–1569–1570.
- 57 “Si riapre a Mosca il ‘problema Stalin’,” *Unità*, 16/3/69.
- 58 The original document is “Progetto documento PCI su questioni internazionali April 1969—Riservata,” Bufalini, Galluzzi, Berlinguer, in, APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 73.3. Also see “Nota su US—Cina—Riservata,” Berlinguer, Galluzzi, Bufalini, in APCI, Dir, 16/4/69, 006–1500–1508. On this copy appear the changes made by Longo. Some of the more substantial changes, were the adding of a phrase on the “rightist danger in Czechoslovakia and the omission of “the use of authoritarian methods” in the socialist countries.
- 59 Longo made this very clear: APCI, Dir, 7–8/5/69, 006–1531.
- 60 APCI, Dir, 006–1533.
- 61 For more on the Hot Autumn generally, see, for example, Ginsborg, *Storia d’Italia*, pp. 419–435.
- 62 Amyot, *The Italian Communist Party*, p. 195.
- 63 Gozzini, “Il rapporto tra il sindacato e il PCI,” pp. 173–208.

- 64 This implied that the CGIL, at its national congress in the autumn of 1969, did not adopt the idea of factory councils, (supported by some of its influential sectoral organizations), as these might have dissipated the centralization of the CGIL's influence over the strike movements. For more on CGIL strategy during the Hot Autumn, see, for example, Bedani, *Politics and Ideology*, pp. 180–186.
- 65 A similar interpretation can be found in Flores, Gallerano, *Sul PCI*, pp. 190–191.
- 66 The disciplinary measure imposed on them (*radiazione*) differed from actual exclusion in that it was revocable. The party members in question formally did not lose their membership but were no longer allowed to assume any function in, or in the name of, the party.
- 67 On the ideas of the *Manifesto* group and the first issues, see Grazia, *Da Natta a Natta*, pp. 31–33.
- 68 “Praga é sola,” *Il manifesto*, issue 4, August 1969.
- 69 Moreover, the *Manifesto* had become very popular on the West European Left, in particular in France and Britain.
- 70 This is according to Caprara, *Quando le botteghe erano oscure*, p. 214.
- 71 The interventions of the plenary CC sessions have been published in (PCI, ed.) *La questione del Manifesto*; Speech by Pajetta: pp. 128–142.
- 72 It should be noted, however, that Berlinguer was also convinced that the positions of the *Manifesto* group were “profoundly wrong”: (PCI, ed.) *La questione del Manifesto*, pp. 347–367.
- 73 “Il dibattito,” in (PCI, ed.) *La questione del Manifesto*, p. 192.
- 74 Caprara, *Quando le botteghe erano oscure*, p. 221.
- 75 *La questione del Manifesto*, pp. 150–167.
- 76 Caprara, *Quando le botteghe erano oscure*, p. 218. Since the mid-1960s Lombardo Radice had developed his own criticism of the socialist countries, which led him to distance himself from the party line on this in 1971. While in 1967 he had defended the case of East German dissident Havemann, in 1969 he supported the French “revisionists” by writing a review of Garaudy's *Le grand tournant du socialisme* for *Politique aujourd'hui*. At the CC meeting of May 1969, at which the party's position on the upcoming Moscow Conference was discussed, he strongly argued for a more critical position with respect to the current events in Czechoslovakia and the communist regimes, and was one of the few to problematise the use of the term “normalization.” (“CC—Il dibattito sulla relazione di Longo,” *Unità*, 29/5/69). The East German SED exerted pressure on the PCI to undertake action against Lombardo Radice, which had no immediate effect. In the SED dossier against Garaudy, Radice was often noted as part of an “international conspiracy of modern revisionism.” Note by the “Büro Internationale Verbindungen” on the letter to *Unità* and report on the 1967 meeting: BA, SAPMDB, SED-ZPA, DY 30/IV A2/20 504 and 507.
- 77 Oral report Cossuta to the Direzione, APCI, Dir, 31/10/68, 1104. However, the Soviets on this occasion had also criticized Amendola.
- 78 It is difficult to estimate how significant these pressures were, and the PCI archives do not mention them.

- 79 Caprara, *Quando le botteghe erano oscure*, p. 218. Caprara and Grazia claim that CC member Donini was planning to publish a philo-Soviet journal with Soviet support. Grazia, *Da Natta a Natta*, p. 34.
- 80 See also Grémion, *Paris–Prague*, p. 223.
- 81 Falsely, it was written that the students had cancelled their planned demonstration because the workers' organizations had not joined in. Hentgès, P. "Prague: vive émotion après le suicide de Palach," *Humanité*, 19/1/69, p. 3.
- 82 See also Deli, *De Budapest*, p. 114.
- 83 "Manifestation dans le centre de Prague—2 morts," *Humanité*, 22/8/69, p. 3. Černík's speech of 25/8, in which he stated that the incidents had been caused by "anti-socialist elements" and visitors from capitalist countries, was reproduced without comment in "Tchécoslovaquie : Une nouvelle situation est créée, déclare Černík," *Humanité*, 25/8/69, p. 3.
- 84 *Humanité*, 22/8/69, p. 4.
- 85 For a similar view see Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 535.
- 86 Hentgès, P. "Gustáv Husák," s.d. (but around 17/4), APCF, "Événements en Tchécoslovaquie," box 3 "Tchécoslovaquie 1967–1979, transmis par Plissonnier," folder 3 "1969." As before the Prague Spring, Hentgès was now the only permanent PCF reporter in Czechoslovakia.
- 87 APCF, Sec, 26/8/69.
- 88 The unusually long report on the situation in Czechoslovakia in the Secretariat decisions of September demonstrates the level of alarm in the PCF leadership. APCF, Sec, 30/9/68.
- 89 For a similar view see Grémion, *Paris–Prague*, p. 203.
- 90 For example, Fajon was sent to Prague and met with Bilák in late August to gain information on the situation. APCF, Sec, 26/8/68. Furthermore, in early October Pavel Auersperg, the newly appointed head of the International Department of the CPCS, went to Paris to "inform" the PCF leadership of the situation. Bartošek, *Les aveux*, p. 195.
- 91 Denis, J. "Note sur mon voyage en Tchécoslovaquie—Pour le Secrétariat—Mai 1969," APCF, "Événements en Tchécoslovaquie," box 3 "Tchécoslovaquie 1967–1979, transmis par Plissonnier," folder 3 "1969."
- 92 APCF, BP, 30/7/70: "In this communication [from the CPCS] our party is asked to take position in favor of the CPCS, of its positions and of the measures it has taken [...]. In response [we should] confirm our position with regard to the military intervention and against certain measures which have followed it, including the recent ones. At the same time [we should] avoid doing anything which leads to a deterioration of relations." As no agreement could be reached in the BP, the issue was taken before the CC. Marchais expressed disagreement with the exclusion of Dubček on the radio station *Europe 1*.
- 93 See especially Streiff, *Kanapa*, pp. 534–538.
- 94 This according to the report by Marchais before the CC of May 1970. Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 536.
- 95 There is a note in the Fajon fund at the PCF archives with the title "26/11/69—Fajon délégation à Prague," with the sole mention "Notes données à Indra." APCF, Fund Fajon, box 8, folder 1 "Documents du PCF."

- 96 Several missions to Prague were carried out to this end; BP member A. Vieuguet, for example, was sent to Prague in March 1969. Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 537.
- 97 For the communication by the BP see *Humanité*, 18/2/72.
- 98 Correspondence PCF-CPCS on this, translated from Russian to German: BA, SAPMDB, SED-ZPA, DY 30/IV 2/2.035: 25/7/72 (Marchais to Husák) and 6/10/72 (Husák to Marchais).
- 99 Bartošek, in his *Les Aveux* of 1996, argues the case, based on extensive research (although questionable in methodological terms) in the archives of the CPCS, for *L'Aveu* being a manipulation, written at the request of opponents of the Prague Spring and as an attack against the PCF. He accuses London of dissimulating his own past as an *apparatchik* of the Comintern and a spy of the CPCS in France. This has caused lively polemics in France, which for lack of space and because the PCF archives contain little new information, shall not be reconstructed here.
- 100 More on the “Slánský trials,” of which this was one, in chapter four.
- 101 Grémion, *Paris–Prague*, p. 192–194.
- 102 APCF, BP, 27/8/70 and 17/9/70.
- 103 The cases themselves will be dealt with here only briefly, as the available archives do not provide much new evidence and because they have been extensively discussed in the literature.
- 104 Lavau, “L’URSS et eux...,” p. 199; and Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 527. Rochet became ill shortly after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, continued to have serious health problems throughout 1969, and was almost permanently hospitalized from November 1969 onwards. Much uncertainty still exists as to Rochet’s illness. After his death in 1983 the party declared that he had suffered from Parkinson’s disease since 1968 (*Humanité*, 17/5/83). Rochet underwent an operation in Moscow at the time of the 1969 Conference, against which, according to Daix (Daix, *Tout mon temps*, p. 441), Aragon and others were seriously opposed. Suspicion has existed since then that his situation was deliberately made worse in Moscow.
- 105 The clearest indication of this is the above-mentioned “Avant-projet pour un article,” s.n., s.d., APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 13, folder 1.
- 106 The disappearance of Rochet can be understood, as P. Robrieux has argued, as part of a longer-term process of “de-Khrushchevization” in the PCF, which started in the early 1960s with the exclusion of Sevrin and also involved the Garaudy case. Robrieux, *La secte*, pp. 27–28.
- 107 Brezhnev in particular showed a preference for Marchais, as the latter had supported him in 1964 after Khrushchev’s fall before the PCF’s Bureau politique and the CC (Grémion, *Paris–Prague*, p. 224). Robrieux claims that the Soviets directly interfered to put an end to the “collective leadership” which was installed in ’69–’70 and to “suggest” Marchais to the BP (Robrieux, *La secte*, pp. 70–72).
- 108 It is possible that Rochet preferred Kanapa to play a key role at the conference and in international contacts more generally, rather than Marchais. Rochet, ill before the conference started, asked Kanapa and not Marchais to write the speech which he was to deliver. APCF, Fund Waldeck Rochet, box 14, folder 4.

- 109 Daix, *Les h  r  tiques*, p. 239; also Robrieux (*La secte*, pp. 116–120) suggests this.
- 110 The initially difficult relationship between Kanapa and Marchais developed in the 1970s into one in which the former had significance influence over the latter in terms of ideology and strategy. See Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 531.
- 111 The new leadership’s ties with Moscow were also secured by the fact that Plissonnier functioned throughout the 1960s to 1980s as an informant to the Soviet KGB. Andrew, Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, p. 395.
- 112 See the discussion of this in Verd  s-Leroux, *Le r  veil*, p. 128.
- 113 Verd  s-Leroux, *Le r  veil*, p. 217.
- 114 A special CC session on the party and intellectuals planned for October was cancelled. Geoffroy, J. “Les compagnons de Jeannette,” *Le nouvel observateur*, 23/9/68.
- 115 The Secretariat decided on this, invoking the argument of financial problems. APCF, Sec, 15/10/68. There was also pressure from the central leadership on the journal *France nouvelle*. APCF, Sec, 30/10/68.
- 116 Daix, *Les h  r  tiques*, pp. 243–244.
- 117 This happened first in an *Humanit  * article by J. Chambaz, assistant of Leroy, of 11 November. The BP of 19/12/68 considered the journal an attack against the party and decided that its collaborators could no longer assume functions in the party organization. APCF, BP, 19/12/68. One month later, the BP defined the journal as revisionist (“...is based on a revisionist current which has existed for a long time and has become more influential following the intervention in Czechoslovakia...”). APCF, BP, 17/1/68.
- 118 Initially, two-thirds of the cell members voted in support of Daix; the BP then sent Henri Fiszbin, CC member and secretary of the federation, to “observe” the cell procedures. Daix, *Les h  r  tiques*, p. 244.
- 119 Daix, *Les h  r  tiques*, p. 244.
- 120 For the party’s reaction see L. Methey, “A propos d’une pr  face,” *Humanit  *, 18/10/68.
- 121 Partial records of the CC meeting can, be found in *Paris–Prague*, pp. 131–142, at 135. The disciplinary measure was “blame.”
- 122 A similar view can be found in Dreyfus, *PCF: Crises et dissidences*, p. 157.
- 123 In early 1970 Garaudy published his dossiers of documents, including this article, in connection to the events: Garaudy, *Toute la v  rit  *. More detail on the conflict between Garaudy and the central leadership can be found in Dreyfus, *PCF: Crises et dissidences*, pp. 156–158; Daix, *Les h  r  tiques*, pp. 248–256.
- 124 The letter, “Est-ce de l’anti-Sovietisme?,” 14/9/69, is published in Garaudy, *Toute la v  rite*, pp. 108–113.
- 125 Verd  s-Leroux, *Le r  veil*, p. 218.
- 126 APCF, Sec, 23/10/69. The fact that the Secretariat decisions, which usually reported on internal party problems in overly euphemistic terms, in this case mentioned the disagreements demonstrates the dimensions of the crisis in the party.
- 127 The BP asked the Yugoslavs to distance themselves from Garaudy’s views, and asked the Spanish Communist Party to break off its contacts with him. APCF, BP, 2/4/70 and 10/9/70.

- 128 Marchais had previously maintained that he had been forced to go to Germany in 1942 and had escaped and returned to France in 1943. In 1977, A. Lecoeur, former BP member expelled in the 1950s, published a document in the right-wing paper *Minute* which confirmed that Marchais had lied. Furthermore, in 1980 the periodical *L'Express* published a document which showed that he had stayed in Germany until 1980. More detail can be found in Charprier, *Les R.G. et le Parti communiste*, pp. 192–198; Daix, *Les hérétiques*, p. 259.
- 129 This disciplinary formula implied that Tillon had not obtained reparation regarding his case, but maintained his functions in the party. For the Tillon case of 1952, see Dreyfus, *PCF: Crisis et dissidences*, pp. 102–109.
- 130 For more detail see Daix, *Les hérétiques*, pp. 264–267; Dreyfus, *PCF: Crisis et dissidences*, pp. 158–159.
- 131 Report by Gen. Walkowski to H. Axen (head of the “Büro internationale Verbindungen” to the CC) 4/10/66 in BA, SAPMDB, SED-ZPA, DY 30/IV A 2/20 464.
- 132 Noirot and Tillon were mentioned alongside Garaudy, but less often. The SED was generally very satisfied with the outcome of the 19th Congress, assuming that it would have a “positive” influence over other CPs in Western Europe. “Zur Entwicklung der internationalen Bewegung und anderen anti-imperialistischen Kräfte seit der internationale Barätung der kommunistische und Arbeiterparteien in Moskow, Juni 1969,” s.n., s.d. (but after February 17), BA, SAPMDB, SED-ZK, DY 30/3489, Fiche 2.
- 133 See Daix, *Tout mon temps*, pp. 438–443. Diax left the PCF in 1973 following the Solzhenitsyn affair. Aragon’s position constantly shifted between criticism of the party and party loyalty. Grémion, *Paris–Prague*, p. 191.
- 134 See the analysis in Grémion, *Paris–Prague*, pp. 213–217.
- 135 Streiff has observed a similar shift after 1968 towards a “nostalgic attachment to the historical world communist movement.” Streiff, *Kanapa*, pp. 542.
- 136 Waldeck Rochet, *L’Avenir du Pcf*, pp. 89–90.
- 137 For example Rochet, *L’Avenir du Pcf*, pp. 92–94.
- 138 Verdès-Leroux, *Le réveil*, p. 219.
- 139 For example in the document adopted at the CC meeting of December 1968 (see below): Rochet, *Pour une démocratie avancée*, p. 25.
- 140 Rochet, *L’Avenir du Pcf*, pp. 145–147.
- 141 Kanapa developed a somewhat differing concept of WCM unity, which was clearly influenced by the PCI. He argued for a “new form of unity” and emphasized the need for common action and strategy while minimizing the need for common analyses. In a *Nouvelle critique* article of 1969 he went as far as to claim that a common doctrine was “illusionary.” However, the changes in the party leadership in 1969–1970 prevented such views from becoming influential. See the discussion of this article in Streiff, *Kanapa*, pp. 519–523.
- 142 “Rapport sur la situation de politique extérieure,” s.n., s.d., APCF, Fund Rochet, box 14, folder 4. For the discussion of it see APCF, BP, 23/1/69.
- 143 “Rapport sur la situation de politique extérieure,” s.n., s.d., APCF, Fund Rochet, box 14, folder 4.
- 144 APCF, BP, 25/9/69.

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- 145 Rochet, *L'Avenir du Pcf*, pp. 150–151.
- 146 Rochet, *L'Avenir du Pcf*, p. 139.
- 147 I agree here with Hincker, *Le PCF au carrefour*, p. 82.
- 148 The insistence on sovereignty in PCF texts after 1968 is notable, for example in Rochet, *L'Avenir du Pcf*, passim; and Rochet, *Pour une d  mocratie avanc  e*, passim. This is also noted in Tiersky, “Le PCF et la d  tente,” pp. 218–241 at 220.
- 149 Khilnani, *Arguing Revolution*, pp. 127–131. I do not agree with Khilnani’s view that, as a result of the crisis of the concept of revolution, the PCF effaced the value of revolution already in the early 1970s.
- 150 Bernstein, “Les forces politiques,” pp. 475–492.
- 151 A similar argument with respect to the PCF return to orthodoxy can be found in Kriegel, “The French Communist Party,” pp. 78–79.
- 152 This is claimed in Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 518.
- 153 Rochet, *L'Avenir du Pcf*, pp. 90–91.
- 154 For a critical discussion of this concept, see Labica, “D  mocratie avanc  e,” p. 287.
- 155 Gr  mion, “Le rouge et le gris,” pp. 767–780; Lazar, *Le communisme*, p. 57.
- 156 On the PSU after May ’68 see Fisera, “Le PSU face    son histoire,” pp. 211–216.
- 157 The SFIO had taken the centrist path by proposing G. Defferre (allied with Mend  s France), while both the PSU and the *Ligue communiste r  volutionnaire* presented their own candidates, M. Rocard and A. Krivine respectively. Pompidou won in the second round of the elections with 57.5 per cent of the vote, against Poher with 42.4 per cent. More detail on the 1969 elections can be found in Bernstein, Rioux, *The Pompidou Years*, pp. 10–16.
- 158 Bernstein, Rioux, *The Pompidou Years*, p. 13.
- 159 APCF, BP, 25/9/69.

CHAPTER 8.
*Internationalism and Eurocommunism
in the 1970s*

In this chapter, I will take the crisis of West European communist internationalism after Czechoslovakia into the 1970s, by developing a hypothesis on the origins and break-up of Eurocommunism. The analysis is based on the argument regarding the nature and contradictions of the internationalism of the PCI and PCF, as became evident through the Czechoslovak crisis.¹ The central point is that, despite the “normalization” of relations between West European communist parties and the Soviet Union in the framework of the world communist movement, the underlying strategic conflict remained unresolved—and this was well understood in Rome and Paris. The coming about of Eurocommunism cannot be explained without bringing into the picture the divergence of strategic interests, as it had forever become visible in 1968. The emergence of Eurocommunism around 1975 demonstrated, in a similar way as the dissent over the invasion of Czechoslovakia had done, the non-resolution of this strategic conflict.

In the vast literature on Eurocommunism, reference is nearly always made to the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968 as a major factor behind the coming about of Eurocommunism. Most often, however, the links between the two events are taken for granted or are not specified. It is often simply affirmed in a general—and intuitive—way that the crushing of the Prague Spring must have made these parties understand how wide the gap was between them and the Soviet Union.² The Eurocommunist leaders themselves observed this direct link by often referring back to the Prague Spring and the invasion.³ The problem with the thesis of the direct link is that it fails to explain the phase of realignment initiated in late 1968 up to the early 1970s. It minimizes the importance of this phase in the longer-term history of these parties and as indicative of certain aspects of their identity which were as important as the aspects which came to the fore during Eurocommunism. The interpretation here is also based on a connection between the Czechoslovak crisis and Eurocommunism. However, the phase

of realignment in-between these two moments will be fully taken into account as illustrative of the identity of West European communist parties, and as announcing the causes of the break-up of Eurocommunism in the late 1970s.

The continuity between 1968 and 1975 will be explained here in a different way. The question is, rather: Why did tension with the Soviets culminate in an open and generalized conflict only in 1975, while during the first half of the decade relations between the West European communist parties and the Soviet Union remained without major incidents? The “delay” of Eurocommunism and the fact that it emerged around 1975 resulted from a combination of factors. Firstly, and very importantly, the PCI and PCF engaged in Eurocommunism only at a moment of deep and multiple conflicts in the world communist movement more generally. In precisely the same way as in 1965–1968, the West European communist cluster could only develop itself in a context of generalized disunity. In connection with this, an important factor has often been overlooked in the literature, namely, the fact that the hey-day of Eurocommunism coincided with the world conference of communist parties held in Berlin in 1976. Secondly, changes in the Cold War and détente, and specifically the dramatic changes in Spain and Portugal, seemed to suggest, once more, the breaking up of the political status quo on the continent. Thirdly, the domestic changes in Italy and France seemed for a moment capable of leading to the end of the domestic cold wars in these countries, at least on the level of organized party politics and parliamentary politics. Finally, there was what can be called a “natural” development inside these parties, by which some of the immediate effects of the Czechoslovak crisis—such as the politics of identity, the creation of the taboo, and the blocking of a debate on the nature of the socialist regimes—needed to wither away first.

The important contradictions and limitations of Eurocommunism stemmed from the diversity of motives and perspectives behind the engagement of the PCI, the PCF and the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) in the Eurocommunist debate. While the disagreements which these parties entertained with the Soviet Union did in effect converge, the internationalist points of reference behind these criticisms and their doctrinal underpinnings differed largely.⁴ The limits to the convergence of the West European communist parties, which were evident already during the peak of the movement and which caused it to fall apart in 1979, can all be traced back to the Czechoslovak crisis. They were, essentially, identical to the reasons

behind the impossibility of a genuinely common perspective and action by the West European communist parties, carried by a PCI-PCF alliance in the aftermath of the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

1. THE ENDURING PROBLEM OF EUROPEAN STRATEGY

In the early 1970s, *détente* became increasingly important to Soviet and communist bloc strategy. However, the Soviet concept of *détente* was, if we follow the terminology of the Italian communists, a static one. It was based upon the consolidation of its dominance over the communist bloc and obstructed change in these regimes, while it did not favor changes in Western Europe, as long as the German question had not been settled. Neither the PCI nor the PCF in the 1970s considered it useful to bring up the issue of the divergence of strategic interests, because they had acquired a level of party autonomy (though much more so in the case of the PCI than in the case of the PCF), and because they thought they would benefit from the global expansion of communism in this phase. However, the strategic divergence became evident once more in the mid-1970s, under the influence of a number of events which suggested shifts in the Cold War order in Europe and the world.

1.1. *East–West relations in the early 1970s*

East–West relations were not disturbed by the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The Western powers—the United States, West Germany and NATO in particular—had displayed a low-key reaction to the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The *détente* that came about after the Czechoslovak crisis was characterized by the dominant role played by the two superpowers and the specific roles played by China and West Germany. *Détente* after 1968 was based on the restoration of discipline and cohesiveness in the communist bloc, largely under Soviet dominance. The frictions which the first signs of *détente*, in particular *Ostpolitik*, non-proliferation and the MLF, had caused before 1968 were now largely resolved through Soviet-imposed discipline. Generally, the perspective of the end of the blocs was most often absent in Soviet and WTO documents in this period.⁵ The Soviet Union was more than ever interested in friendly relations with the United States and the West European powers, for several reasons: the need to cut military spend-

ing, the need to import Western technology, and the enduring rivalry with China.⁶ With regard to (West) European integration, by contrast, the Soviet Union continued to display hostility. The dynamic of European integration threatened to revive pan-European sentiments in Eastern Europe, which, as had been the case in Czechoslovakia in 1968, might upset the “unity” of the communist bloc.⁷ After 1968 the United States and NATO not only recognized Soviet dominance over Eastern Europe; they favored it. According to the so-called Sonnenfeldt Doctrine, the American government acknowledged that greater “organic unity” between the Soviet Union and Eastern and Central Europe was in the strategic interests of the United States.⁸

In the early 1970s, the Soviet Union obtained a solution to its major goals regarding East–West *détente*, namely, a settlement of the German question and the start of talks on controlled disarmament. West German *Ostpolitik* entered into a second phase in 1969 when W. Brandt became chancellor. West Germany signed an agreement on the acceptance of the post-war borders with Poland in December 1970. The Basic Treaty signed by East and West Germany in 1972 included the renouncing of force and mutual recognition, although this did not imply fully legal recognition. However, it was of crucial importance that these agreements were preceded by a non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and West Germany, signed in August 1970.⁹ Moreover, in their talks with Brandt, the East German leaders were closely controlled by Moscow. Although the West German government operated in a more independent way, at all times it took into account the positions of its NATO partners, in particular the United States. The United States and the Soviet Union entertained similar worries, though set in different contexts, regarding the ambitions of their German partner to upset the (territorial) status quo in Europe.¹⁰

With regard to disarmament, in July 1968 the Soviet Union and the United States (but not France, China and Romania) signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Both superpowers initiated SALT (Strategic Arms Limitations Talks) in Helsinki in November 1969. Negotiations on the equilibrated reduction of land forces in Europe were initiated in Vienna in 1973, and the Soviet Union and the United States reached an agreement in the same year on the prevention of nuclear war.¹¹ Outside Europe, the Soviet Union seemed to reinforce its influence in the Third World liberation struggles and wars. The outcome of the Vietnam War was understood as a victory for North Vietnam and the Soviet Union.¹² Soviet intervention in Angola in late 1975, with Cuba, led to the

establishment of a communist regime; furthermore, Moscow intervened in Ethiopia in 1976–1977.¹³ In sum, the Soviet Union continued to combine stability aspirations in Europe with communist expansion outside the old continent.

At its March 1969 meeting, the WTO launched another appeal for the holding of a European conference of states on security. Significantly, the appeal no longer included the perspective of the “dissolution of the military blocs,” and US participation was no longer opposed. The Helsinki conferences on peace and security in Europe, held between 1973 and 1975, were the outcome of this appeal. They translated the atmosphere of *détente* into concrete measures in terms of the recognition of the territorial status quo, economic co-operation and human rights issues. All parties involved now formally recognized the westward borders of Poland, East Germany and the Soviet Union. The perspective of East–West trade co-operation was included, which would provide the Soviet Union with access to Western technology and would permit the expansion of the East European markets to Western consumers. Importantly, after strong pressure from the Western powers the Soviet Union agreed to sign the so-called Third Basket, including commitment to “human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

The Helsinki process, in its effects, was a mix of *détente* “from above” and “from below.” It was an expression of *détente* “from above” in the sense that the Western powers recognized the Soviet Union as the hegemon of Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union recognized the United States as co-determining the fate of Europe. In the longer term, Helsinki was to foster domestic social and political change in Eastern Europe, and thus the loosening of bloc cohesiveness and *détente* “from below.” This occurred, firstly, through the implicit support given by the Helsinki process to dissident movements, and secondly, through the economic and cultural contacts between East and West that came about. While the continued persecution of dissidents in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe demonstrated the limits of the commitment to human rights, the Helsinki resolutions provided dissident movements across Eastern Europe with a moral and political standard, formally acknowledged by their governments, as a basis from which protest against repression and injustice. Moreover, Helsinki marked a clear retreat from doctrinal consistency on behalf of the Soviet Union, as the Western definitions of human rights and freedom were formally acknowledged. This contributed to the crisis of legitimacy of communist ideology.¹⁴

While *détente* in the 1970s created the conditions for change in Eastern

Europe, it left the question of socialist transformation in the West unresolved. It is in this sense that the actual developments did not correspond to the PCI's notion of dynamic détente. Instead, after the conclusion of an agreement with Germany, after the favorable ending of the Vietnam War, and after the initiation of disarmament talks with the Western powers, the West European communist parties became less useful to the Soviet Union.¹⁵ To be sure, they were still of use in the context of the world communist movement (unity, orthodoxy and the anti-Maoist campaign) and to disintegrate the Western bloc by reviving anti-Americanism in public opinion and government policy. However, low Soviet interest in revolution in the West was evident from the fact that, after the settlement of Vietnam and the German question—two international problems which had always been invoked as justifications for the defensive and cautious Soviet strategy on the European continent—Soviet strategy in Europe did not shift to a more offensive register.

Events in 1973 made it clear that, not only for the Soviet Union but also for the United States, détente went hand in hand with the consolidation of spheres of influence and with attempts at expanding these outside Europe. The October War of 1973 between Israel, Syria and Egypt temporarily put both the communist and the Atlantic blocs on military alert. Although the Soviet Union and the United States pressured their allies towards a ceasefire, the ongoing war in the Middle East, as well as the global energy and economic crisis which was its immediate consequence, brought antagonism between the two blocs to the fore once more.¹⁶ The perception that Latin America was vital to American security interests led the US government to support the overthrowing of the Popular Front government led by S. Allende in Chile in September 1973. Allende's government, which had been democratically elected and which was not actively supported by the Soviet Union, announced a Marxist-oriented reform program. Through a military coup d'état an American-friendly regime was installed.¹⁷

For the first time since 1968, however, the situation seemed to shift in Europe too: the right-wing dictatorships of Portugal, Spain and Greece collapsed in 1975, and the communist parties played a major role in all three cases. The changes in Western Europe, however, were not due to a significant change in Soviet strategy, although the Soviet Union did support the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) during the revolutionary period in Portugal in 1974–1975. The overthrowing by a military conspiracy in April 1974 of the fascist regime led by A. Salazar and M. Caetano gave way to a

phase of “transition to socialism” in which the PCP played the dominant role. Cunhal’s party was among the most “orthodox” and Soviet-loyal communist parties in the world, and had supported the invasion of Czechoslovakia. After its entry in the temporary government formed in April 1974, the Portuguese Communist Party radicalized and attempted to become the dominant actor. As rumors of a communist takeover spread, relations between the communists and M. Soares’ moderate socialists deteriorated by the spring of 1975. The non-communist parties and the military joined forces to exclude the PCP from government in the fall of 1975, which marked the start of the PCP’s domestic decline. The Portuguese revolution of 1974–1975 was not only a domestic development: it was also a Cold War crisis and a colonial crisis. The United States and several West European governments and political parties, such as the West German SPD, actively supported the Portuguese socialists against the PCP. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, while supporting the PCP, increasingly shifted its attention to the Portuguese colonies in Africa, primarily Angola.¹⁸ From the perspective of the West European communist parties, the events in 1974–1975 actualized the question of regime change on the European continent. However, the strategic shifts undertaken around 1975 by the PCI and the PCF demonstrate that these parties themselves entertained only limited hopes for the coming about of “dynamic détente.”

1.2. *The PCI: from dynamic détente to NATO*

While the divergence of interests regarding Soviet and PCI conceptions of détente was covered up in 1969, international circumstances in the first half of the 1970s were such as not to bring the furthest implications of Soviet détente to the fore. The détente that came about in the early 1970s seemed temporarily congruent with the PCI’s own conception of dynamic détente. Matters became somewhat more problematic, however, when Moscow attempted to improve relations with Italy. As part of Moscow’s policy of rapprochement with the European powers, and following the agreement with West Germany and the visit of Pompidou to Moscow, both in 1970, Soviet foreign minister Gromyko paid a visit to the Italian government in November 1970. Significantly, the latter, at the end of the talks, refused to insert in the public communication a statement on the “overcoming of the blocs,” as Italian foreign minister A. Moro had proposed.¹⁹

Given the relatively fortunate situation of world communism in the early 1970s, the PCI pragmatically avoided an open conflict with the Soviets.

While, at a meeting with the Soviets in December 1970, Berlinguer affirmed that he “did not wish to disguise certain differences on specific issues and also on more general questions,”²⁰ during his visit to Moscow in April 1971 he emphasized the friendly relations between the two parties.²¹ The divergence became apparent, however, when the question of radical change in Western Europe arose. In 1973 the PCI initiated the strategy of “historic compromise” with the Christian Democratic Party. This choice of political centrism rather than a Left alliance was acutely provoked by the events in Chile: as the coup d’état in Chile was a quintessential expression of the static nature of détente, it could not but make a profound impression on the Italian communists. Berlinguer’s point of departure was the assessment that a Left government coalition, even when it disposed of a 51 per cent majority in parliament, had no chances of survival in a country where the Christian Democratic Party had such a firm political power position and enjoyed such wide socio-cultural influence. An effective democratic strategy needed to be based on the convergence and eventual alliance of all democratic, popular and progressive forces.²²

While Chile was the direct and professed cause behind the historical compromise strategy, other, domestic causes led the PCI to move to the centre and increase its emphasis on democracy. Since late 1969, signs of a (violent) right-wing reaction to the 1968–1969 mobilization of the Left had become increasingly evident. The right-wing terrorist attack in Piazza Fontana in Milan in December 1969 was the first sign of a violent right-wing mobilization of forces. In the early 1970s, the parties of the Right, in particular the neo-fascist *Movimento sociale italiano* (MSI), were gaining support phase. At the same time, Italian Christian Democracy, despite a marked electoral victory in 1972, seemed to enter a crisis, symbolized by the acceptance of a new law on divorce through a referendum in the spring of 1974.²³ The global economic crisis which hit Italy in 1974 led in particular to enduring problems of inflation. As DC leader A. Moro in particular saw it, it was to become impossible for the Christian Democratic Party to govern without the PCI. Moreover, by the mid-1970s terrorism from the far Left as well as from the far Right created an extremely unstable political situation.²⁴ This, the PCI’s victory at the June 1976 parliamentary elections where it obtained its historical record of 34.4 per cent, and the fact that the PSI refused to enter government without the communists, further pushed Berlinguer’s party towards governmental participation.²⁵ The PCI gradually moved into the “area of government,” which implied its being involved

in and supporting government decision making, without, however, having formal ministerial responsibility. The historical compromise strategy resulted in the formation of a series of governments of “national solidarity” between 1976 and 1979, which included the DC, the PCI, the PSI and the smaller Social Democratic and Republican Parties.²⁶

The new domestic strategy dramatically affected the party’s internationalism. The PCI’s internationalism now needed to correspond to the most suitable and safest international constellation as a context for the historical compromise strategy. This led the party to undertake a major shift in its internationalism in terms of European and global strategy, and led it to accept Italy’s membership in NATO.²⁷ At the same time, the question of government participation forced the PCI into making clear that the future socialist Italy would not be aligned with the communist bloc. It would be a part of the broad movement towards a socialist, democratic and enlarged “Third Way” Europe. Although the actual point of departure for this strategy was the left-wing (communist and non-communist) forces of the EEC countries, the boundaries of this Europe would include Eastern Europe as well, although PCI texts stopped well before ever making this explicit. The question of how this Europe would relate to the Soviet Union as a state and a superpower also remained unclear. Europe in this conception was considered “not anti-Soviet or anti-American.” However, it would not be neutralist in the longer term or as a matter of principle (although maybe *de facto* in the short term), but was envisaged as a force that would provoke the “overcoming” and hence the disintegration (through a non-violent and gradual process) of the two politico-military blocs.²⁸

It is relevant at this point to distinguish the different steps of this shift towards the Western alliance. While in 1973 the PCI leadership initiated contacts with the United States, at the December 1974 meeting of the Central Committee Berlinguer declared that the PCI should abandon the slogan “Italy out of NATO–NATO out of Italy.” Until this point, the shift can be explained as inspired by pragmatism and the need, in order to make the *compromesso storico* viable, to provide it with a realistic international framework. A break occurred, however, in the next step, namely Berlinguer’s statement of June 1976 that NATO was the *most suitable* framework for socialism in Italy and the one in which the PCI felt most protected.²⁹ To state that NATO was not only accepted but desired as an international framework for socialism in Italy suggested that the aim of “overcoming the blocs” through European dynamic détente was abandoned.³⁰

This second phase of the shift to NATO can only be understood as the result of the understanding that dynamic d  tente was not likely to take place in the foreseeable future. In the PCI leadership, as we have seen, this understanding emerged in August 1968, was tabooed in 1969, and subsequently ignored. The agreements regarding the German question in the early 1970s, however positive their general effects on the situation in Europe and however appreciative the PCI's official reaction to them, in some sense demonstrated the failure of dynamic d  tente. The chronology of the agreements made it sharply clear that any initiative which went beyond simple affirmations on cultural or economic exchange, but which went to the very heart of the Cold War in Europe—the German question and disarmament—would need to pass via Moscow in the first place. The failed attempt by the PCI itself to contribute to a solution for the German question³¹ only illustrated more clearly how unrealistic dynamic d  tente was in the given circumstances. The shift to NATO reflected the understanding that d  tente had failed to have a significant impact on power relations in the Western bloc and the domestic order in the Western states. The events in Chile and Portugal demonstrated the extent to which the United States was still ready actively to intervene in domestic politics.

Thus, in a sense, the historic compromise and the shift towards NATO needed to make it a viable strategy and were the PCI's own "static d  tente," both in domestic and international terms.³² By accepting NATO, the PCI leadership hoped to make communist participation in government acceptable to the US. However, recent archival findings suggest that throughout the 1970s, the latter continued to oppose PCI government participation, despite the *compromesso storico* and Eurocommunism. While the Carter administration seems not to have been willing to intervene militarily, it did maintain its strategy of keeping the PCI out of government through far-reaching political and economic support to the DC. Moreover, in 1974–1976 NATO organized a Crisis Committee, involving the United States, France, the FRG and Great Britain, closely to observe the political developments in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece. This, along with American economic and financial pressure, was part of a non-military US and NATO strategy to keep communist parties out of power in the West. The PCI's acceptance of NATO seems not to have had a significant effect on this.³³ This is not to argue that the PCI leadership gave up dynamic d  tente as an ideal and a matter of principle. Eurocommunism to the PCI, then, seemed for a brief moment to present itself as the final chance for dynamic d  tente, still the

preferred option to the NATO and static *détente* strategy. The domestic successes of the Spanish Communist Party and the changes in the PCF seemed, in the short term, to lead to a momentum in which dynamic *détente*, carried out from within the world communist movement, could become reality rather than a slogan. Eurocommunism to the PCI represented a last encompassing attempt at changing the world communist movement from within. There were two motives connected to this. The first and more banal one was a continuation of the minimalist meaning of polycentrism: an attempt to construct a relatively powerful and successful sub-grouping in the world communist movement, through which the Eurocommunist parties would be able to bargain more autonomy and to enforce doctrinal pluralism inside the world communist movement.³⁴ As we have seen, the regional meetings of West European communist parties had a history of serving as a lobby-group in the world communist movement for increasing party autonomy; as we shall see below, this was at least one important feature of Eurocommunism.

The PCI saw Eurocommunism as a way to develop a qualitatively different type of “Third Way” socialism—neither Soviet communist nor social democratic. This followed up on the maximalist definition of polycentrism. Although it did not go as far as to advocate the imposition of a new model for socialism, it did envisage Eurocommunism as an example of a democratic form of socialism with potential model value. The ambition was increasingly to influence events in Eastern Europe, not through attacks on the communist governments in office there, nor through open support for the adversaries of these regimes, but through the diffusion of its own ideas on internationalism and socialism in the societies of Eastern Europe—understood as an aspect of *détente* from below.³⁵ However, the Czechoslovak crisis itself had demonstrated the great difficulties with which diversity would be accepted.

1.3. *The PCF: from sovereignty to foreign policy*

Equally in the case of the PCF, the problems connected to internationalism which the Czechoslovak crisis had raised remained without solution in the first half of the 1970s. This was so despite its reconciliation with the Soviet Union and the world communist movement, which was far more explicit and complete than in the case of the PCI. Many bilateral meetings took place in 1970–1972, all of which testified to the “identity of views” between the two parties.³⁶ Underneath this apparent convergence, however, lay the unresolved conflict regarding European strategy. As in the case

of the PCI, domestic and international circumstances between 1969 and 1974 were such that the PCF did not consider it useful to bring this divergence to the surface. However, the PCF's shifts in 1975–1976 demonstrate that, whenever a profound upsetting of the social status quo on the European continent seemed the order of the day, the party was willing to make the conflict of interests apparent. In this sense, 1975–1977 followed up on 1965 and 1968.

The settlement of the German question in the early 1970s gave the PCF proof of Soviet unwillingness seriously to challenge the political and social status quo in Europe. For the PCF, the problem had a different background than for the PCI, as the former more resolutely than the latter argued for a more aggressive policy vis-à-vis the West. The PCF could do little other than accept the German settlement out of discipline: its Bureau politique in August 1970 dryly noted that the Soviet–West German agreement “should be considered as very important.”³⁷ However, it can fairly be suspected that the party was not enthusiastic: next to the problem of Soviet strategy, the reduction of the “West German danger” further weakened anti-fascism as a domestic source of legitimation for the PCF. The PCF attempted to make the best of this situation by, on the one hand, intensifying its contacts with both the SED and the West German KPD, and on the other hand once more emphasizing the revolutionary dimension of peaceful coexistence.³⁸ As to the first point, the PCF organized a trilateral meeting with the SED and the KPD—and without the Soviets—to discuss the German problem, which took place in Berlin in late October 1970.³⁹

As the European order seemed to shift around 1975, Kanapa undertook yet another attempt to convince the party of the value of peaceful coexistence as an offensive strategy. In his analysis before the Central Committee meeting of April 1975, he assessed that the “balance of forces” was advantageous to socialism and that it was the capitalist forces which aimed at preserving stability in Europe and the world. Emphasizing once more that “peaceful coexistence does not mean the political and social status quo,” he stated that the antagonism between capitalism and communism was “irresolvable.” This was an obvious call for an offensive socialist strategy in Europe, which seemed to hint at Soviet deficiencies in this regard. He stressed that the Helsinki accords were a beginning rather than an end, and, subtly pointing at Czechoslovakia, emphasized that the “struggle for peace” would pass through “respect for the independence and the sovereignty of the peoples.”⁴⁰

The PCF's worries regarding peaceful coexistence as a strategy for global truce between the Soviet Union and the United States mirrored France's continuing worries regarding détente as a superpower conspiracy at the expense of the old continent. The conditions of détente, as it came about after 1969, no longer favored a major role for France. While May '68 had demonstrated the limited public support for expensive national military and nuclear programs, the invasion of Czechoslovakia jeopardized the possibilities of Gaullist-type bilateral contacts with the socialist regimes.⁴¹ Faced with these new conditions, and with its continuing decline as a global power, France under Pompidou reconciled itself with the Atlantic alliance, though to some extent on its own terms. As France remained a member of NATO's political institutions without joining in the military command, a *modus vivendi* with the United States came about in which the latter no longer opposed limited French military and strategic autonomy. Under Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing, France sought in (variations of) a European defense program an alternative to the Atlantic defense system. When this appeared impossible, the French government, maintaining that "dissuasion is exclusively national," chose to further develop its own nuclear program, initiated under de Gaulle. However, while the United States in the early 1970s was no longer opposed to the French *force de frappe*, this changed once more by 1973, with the revival of the Cold War atmosphere and the outbreak of the conflict in the Middle East. As a result, French national defense strategy remained in an impasse throughout the 1970s.⁴²

It was vital to the PCF to convince its partners in the communist world that France under Pompidou was shifting towards a more pro-Atlantic strategy, as this seemed to be the only way to revitalize Soviet strategy in Europe. In July 1971 the PCF's Bureau politique decided that the attention of the "brother parties" should be directed to the French pro-American shift.⁴³ Marchais, in a message to SED leader E. Honecker in 1972, threatened that if the socialist countries did not take account of the PCF's interpretation of French foreign policy, and if they did not "give the party the proper assistance in the struggle to overthrow the regime," the PCF would refuse to support their policies.⁴⁴ After its 21st Congress of 1974, the PCF more openly than ever before referred to this problem, stating that "peaceful coexistence does not imply the social and economic status quo, which the Soviets sometimes seem to forget."⁴⁵ The changes which the PCF underwent in 1975–1977 were diverse in nature but interconnected: the

domestic Union of the Left strategy; the abandoning of some elements of Leninist doctrine; the distance taken from, and the open attacks on, the Soviet Union; and Eurocommunism. They have been interpreted in the literature either as a direct consequence of the Czechoslovak crisis or as caused solely by the domestic dynamic of the Union of the Left.⁴⁶ While Czechoslovakia and the strategic problem it had revealed were the longer-term, more fundamental cause behind the PCF's shift in 1975, the domestic dynamic of the *Union de la gauche* was the short-term cause behind it. It was a constant feature of PCF history that a conflict of interests with the Soviet Union, however profound, would only lead the PCF publicly to take distance from Moscow, when two other factors occurred. These were, firstly, a (perceived) urgent reason of domestic strategy, and secondly, an atmosphere of open polemics with the Soviet Communist Party and the breaking *by the latter first* of the codes of "brotherly relations." This had also been the situation in the summer of 1968.

Like the PCI, the PCF in the early 1970s resolutely chose to improve its domestic position and its chances to enter government. It developed a rather classic strategy of a Left alliance with the Socialist Party, the renewed PS. The "Programme for a Democratic Government of Popular Union" (*Programme commun*), signed between Marchais and Mitterrand in 1972, followed the course outlined in the Champigny Manifesto, at the 1970 Congress and in the party's 1971 program. The perspective was that, as France would transform towards socialism through a program of economic and political reforms, the government alliance would shift to the Left and the PCF would become the dominant force.⁴⁷ The reforms involved classic aims such as the nationalization of key industries. New, however, was the explicit recognition of the alternation of power and thus the possibility that the communist party might be outvoted during the transition to socialism. Another core element of Leninism was—at least formally—given up in 1976 when Marchais, in a rather dictatorial manner and without previously informing the wider party organs, announced the abandoning of reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat.⁴⁸ The 22nd Congress held in 1976 confirmed this and presented itself as the return to the Rochet era. At the same time though, the leading role of the communist party was explicitly reaffirmed.⁴⁹ The concessions made to pluralism were the result of both crises of 1968 and a response to one of the most important sources of criticism of the PCF. However, it remained unclear—and the future break-up

of the alliance confirmed the doubts—how seriously the PCF took these concessions in practice.

Like the PCI, the PCF needed to provide this domestic program with the most appropriate and safest international framework; this led it to undertake major shifts in its foreign and defense policy. Firstly, as it had done on the eve of the Czechoslovak crisis, it attempted to make its domestic partner, the PS, acceptable to the communist parties in the East. In September 1970, the Bureau politique decided that the socialist regimes in Eastern Europe should actively be encouraged to develop relations with the PS. Friendly relations between the Soviet Union and the PS were envisaged as possibly to be based on questions of peace and European security.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the PCF received signs of low Soviet enthusiasm for their domestic strategy and for the *Programme commun*. This led in 1973 to considerable tension between the two parties.⁵¹

The understanding grew that, if the PCF wished to secure its domestic strategy internationally, it should undertake a major shift in foreign policy. While in 1972 the party, in line with Soviet policy, was still opposed to the French *force de frappe*, by 1976 it expressed itself in favor of a French nuclear program which would provide the nation with an atomic bomb. The new defense program, made public in the spring of 1977, was independent of any international alliance and the bomb would be directed at wherever the danger was supposed to come from (“*tous azimuts*”). The PCF presented this as the only truly *national* defense strategy for France, and as more supportive of French sovereignty than the military programs envisaged by the government. This was a matter of exploiting sovereignty as a source of legitimation. In terms of internal party politics, the shift resulted from the growing influence of Kanapa, who was virtually the sole architect of PCF defense and foreign policy at this stage.⁵² The changes in internationalism were only possible because they were led by people such as Kanapa, who, besides benefiting from considerable influence over Marchais, could hardly be labeled “revisionist.” The limited distance taken vis-à-vis the Soviet Union only became possible, firstly, once the anti-revisionist campaign was completed and its repercussions no longer felt; and secondly, once the new leadership, led by Marchais, had sufficiently consolidated itself with respect to the party rank and file, the apparatus, and the communist world.

The adoption of the *force de frappe* by the PCF was not merely a tactical move to make itself more acceptable to the French public as a government candidate. Nor was it merely a tactical move to pressure the Socialist

Party into a less “Atlanticist” position—although it was also this. The party considered a nationally oriented and isolationist foreign policy as the only option available, for lack of any alternative. The new foreign and military foreign policy seemed the only option available for the PCF if it wished to find common ground on this issue with the still predominantly NATO-oriented PS. The PCF, in contrast to its Italian counterpart, considered a shift towards NATO as not only undesirable but also unnecessary. It was so because of the widespread appeal of anti-Americanism across the French political spectrum and the partial disconnection of France from NATO. Further, Europe could not constitute the basis of a defense strategy either. This was so because the party lacked a strong discourse on, or affinity with, Europe, either with regard to the EEC (as it raised the questions of supranationalism or federalism which were unacceptable to the PCF) or in the “Atlantic to Urals” version (as this was identified with Gaullism). To be sure, it did shift in the mid-1970s to a less negative appreciation of the EEC. Besides being motivated largely by the need to compromise with the socialists and to accept existing realities, this was also the result of a certain influence felt by the PCI and the Eurocommunist dynamic, as will become clear below. However, Europe at no point played a major role in the PCF’s international strategy and outlook.⁵³

As the question of the international alignment of a future socialist France seemed an urgent one, the party had to make it clear that it did not envisage this future socialist France to be part of the communist bloc and subject to the tightest forms of discipline inside it.⁵⁴ The affirmation made at the 20th Congress of 1972 that the PCF would “disengage France from any alliance” was directed not only at the Socialist Party and NATO, but also at the Soviet Union.⁵⁵ Hence, the PCF was left with little other option than a retreat into an “isolationist” policy and an emphasis on national sovereignty. The domestic dynamic made the party shift once more to a strong emphasis on national sovereignty, which was reminiscent of 1968 and was used against the Soviet Union.⁵⁶ This line was fairly consistent with the party’s identity and history and with some aspects of general French political culture; it was, however, also completely out of touch with current political and economic developments in Europe and the world. Moreover, it ignored the implications of the Brezhnev Doctrine, which in 1968 had sharply evidenced the futility of the PCF’s arguments regarding sovereignty.

To the Soviets, the conflict with the PCF over European strategy and defense at that point was more upsetting than its many conflicts and dis-

agreements with the PCI. This was so because the Italians had acquired something resembling an *enfant terrible* status in the world communist movement and had, over the past twenty years, obtained a higher degree of real party autonomy than the French. The Soviets relied to a greater extent on the PCF, both in the context of European strategy and for the sake of unity and orthodoxy in the world communist movement. However, the crucial factor which made the Soviets at this point react differently to the changes in the two parties was that the PCF, unlike the PCI, seemed to intend, once in government, radically to change France's foreign and defense policy. The Soviets directly interfered in the PCF on several occasions. On the eve of the Eurocommunist summit meeting in Madrid in 1977, the Soviets sent a letter to the French pressuring them not only not to attend the meeting but also to obstruct it.⁵⁷ While a press campaign against the PCF was launched in *Pravda* similar to the one of autumn 1968, the conflict came into the open at the European conference of communist parties held in Berlin in 1976. In March 1977, shortly after the local elections in France which resulted in the marked progress of the Left alliance, the Soviets sent another letter to the PCF in which they attacked "certain leaders" (Marchais and Kanapa in particular) for their open criticism of the Soviet Union.⁵⁸ The PCF leadership discussed the conflict with the Soviets somewhat more openly than it had done in late 1969 (this time, the problem was presented to the CC), but the party's reactions to the Soviets remained mostly cautious and behind closed doors. Furthermore, like in 1968, the Soviets interfered by sending propaganda material to militants and by supporting adversaries of the Marchais-Kanapa line.⁵⁹

The conflict with the Soviets and the domestic dynamic led the PCF leadership openly to criticize the regimes of "really existing socialism," thereby going beyond the changes of 1969. The criticism mounted slowly and gradually; it involved the economy, state ideology and careful support to dissidents. The party protested against the repression of the workers' riots in Gdańsk (Poland) in 1970-1971 and took the opportunity to state that the Polish regime displayed "weaknesses." Moreover, the party protested against the imprisonment of Soviet dissident L. Plyutch and organized meetings in honor of him.⁶⁰ The publication in French of *The Gulag Archipelago* by the well-known Soviet writer and dissident A. Solzhenitsyn and the repression against him in the Soviet Union in 1973 caused great consternation and lively debates on the French Left.⁶¹ In response to this, Marchais was pressured into affirming that in a socialist France Solzhe-

nitsyn would be able to publish his work.⁶² In late 1975, the PCF leadership allowed the party journalists greater liberty in writing on the socialist regimes.⁶³ In December 1975, after the first Eurocommunist meeting (on which more below) and following a broadcast on French television on the Soviet prison camps, the PCF went as far as to comment in the following terms: "...such unjustifiable facts could not but cast prejudice on socialism and on the fame that the Soviet union has, rightly, gained among workers and peoples of the world...."⁶⁴

However, all these criticisms of the Soviet Union remained, although polemical and straightforward, incidental. They focused on a specific set of issues, namely repression and human rights. They were not connected to a wider analysis of the political systems in these countries, socialism more generally, and what was to be learnt from all this for the French experience. Official party ideology incorporated these criticisms, but not without cutting off the sharp edges. Party historian J. Elleinstein, in *Histoire de l'URSS*, reduced the shortcomings of the Soviet regime to "occasional remnants of Stalinism," while emphasizing that the regime as a whole could by no means be defined as (neo)-Stalinist.⁶⁵ This did not go much beyond the acceptance of limited criticism in 1969, and also Marchais in *Le d  fi d  mocratique* of 1973 avoided fundamental criticism of the socialist regimes. The superiority of the socialist regimes over capitalism remained unquestioned. Only *L'URSS et nous*, published in 1978 in the tense atmosphere of Eurocommunism, marked a (temporary) breakthrough, in that it interpreted Stalinism as the result of "inevitable contradictions" in Soviet society.⁶⁶

This type of more profound criticism of the Soviet regime occurred only temporarily and as a *consequence* of Eurocommunism and of the embittered relations with the Soviets rather than as a cause behind them. A discussion developed, at this point, on the differences between the Soviet and PCF conceptions of socialism. It went beyond criticisms regarding human rights and beyond the implicit abandoning of parts of the Leninist heritage in the domestic program. However, this discussion took place only behind the closed doors of the Bureau politique and was largely the work of Kanapa and his allies, such as Fiterman. The question was only sporadically communicated to the wider party and, most probably, remained disconnected from the ideology and culture of the rank and file and parts of the apparatus.⁶⁷ At a bilateral summit meeting with the CPSU in Moscow in November 1977, the PCF delegation, more explicitly than the party had ever done before in such a context, presented a list of its disagreements

with the Soviets. This not only involved relations between communist parties, peaceful coexistence and French defense policy, but also the dictatorship of the proletariat, domestic alliance strategy, pluralism and democracy. The French concluded that these divergences “might be due to different concepts of socialism.” To the Soviets, the totality of these disagreements and criticisms was unacceptable.⁶⁸

Eurocommunism to the PCF was an attempt to change the world communist movement from within—in terms of strategy, doctrine and organization. In this, the motivations of the French and Italian communists were similar. However, while for the PCI it was one attempt in a series of many, for the PCF it was the sole serious attempt in its history. The history of the latter party’s involvement in West European communist convergence demonstrates that this involvement was first and foremost motivated by a wish to expand the party’s autonomy in the communist world and its bargaining position vis-à-vis the Soviets. This was no different now. Eurocommunism served the PCF to make its domestic and foreign policies, elaborated in the context of the *Union de la gauche*, acceptable to the world communist movement by re-enforcing its own power position in it. It aimed to change the situation in the world communist movement so that the PCF would be free to develop its domestic strategy and to secure Soviet support for it. This involved not only the question of the internal organization of the world communist movement, but also a strategic question. The PCF expected Eurocommunism to push WCM strategy towards a more “offensive” register against the West European governments and the Atlantic alliance. It did not mean developing a common model or strategy for European communism.

2. THE COMING ABOUT AND BREAK-UP OF EUROCOMMUNISM

While the profound and long-term cause behind the rise of Eurocommunism was the conflict with the Soviet Union regarding European strategy, there were three more immediate causes. Firstly, the intensification of meetings between West European communist parties in the first half of the 1970s; secondly, the sudden and multifaceted changes in the PCF; and thirdly, the situation in Spain and the role played by the CPE. These three factors will be briefly dealt with here, as well as the further break-up of Eurocommunism and its causes.

2.1. *Bilateral and regional meetings before 1975*

The Eurocommunist meetings of 1975–1977 were preceded by a series of West European communist conferences and meetings, which followed up on the regional conferences of the mid-1960s. On a practical level, the meetings stimulated the creation of a network of communist leaders in Western Europe, which favored the coming about of Eurocommunism. More specifically, these meetings were important in that they stimulated the PCF's increasing critical distance from the Soviet Union and led it to take on a somewhat more positive position with regard to the EEC. On the other hand, these meetings sharply marked the limits of the convergence and demonstrated the different perspectives in terms of strategy and doctrine, especially between the PCI and PCE on the one hand and the PCF on the other. These meetings became a forum for the assessment of diversity rather than a dynamic process for the creation of West European communist identity.⁶⁹ Eurocommunism, as it directly emerged from this convergence, could not but inherit these contradictions.

While the number of regional meetings increased significantly after the Czechoslovak crisis, it had ambivalent effects on the Eurocommunist dynamic. On the one hand, it had made the PCI, the PCF and other parties understand that they had an interest in co-operating *inside* the world communist movement: such co-operation could increase their bargaining position, their autonomy and their chances of influencing the practices and theories of internationalism. It was able, as we have seen, to obstruct attempts at re-imposing strict orthodoxy and monolithism. On the other hand, the 1968–1969 crisis had broken any potential that had existed as to transforming the West European communist convergence into something more than a lobby-group for autonomy inside the world communist movement, or into something that resembled the PCI's maximalist conception of polycentrism. In the context of the realignment after 1969, the West European communist cluster was, to some extent, “normalized” and employed by the powerful actors of the world communist movement. As the Soviets and their loyal allies realistically understood that they could no longer prevent this convergence from further developing, they attempted to influence it from within and to turn it into an instrument for avoiding further disintegration and for preserving what was left of world communist unity. The fact that the regional meetings were now not only accepted by the Soviet Union but to some extent even welcomed, suggests this change in their meaning.⁷⁰ These attempts succeeded only to a limited extent, but they did succeed in leaving

the West European communist convergence, and Eurocommunism at a later stage, in an ill-defined position between different projects and motivations.

Following this logic, the PCF was particularly active in its contacts with other West European communist parties in the early 1970s, and saw it as the continuation of the realignment after Czechoslovakia. Its motives were relatively clear: the holding together of a grouping of West European communist parties would, on the one hand, prevent these parties from breaking away from the world communist movement or from drifting too far into “heterodoxy,” while on the other hand such a grouping would be able to promote its interests and visions in the wider world communist movement. Moreover, the PCF saw for itself a special role in this constellation, which followed from its traditional role and provided it with a position of power in both contexts. The outcome of the 1969 Moscow Conference led the PCF to conclude that it should “expand its friendly relations” with the West European communist parties. This was explicitly brought into connection with the promotion of the new periodical *New International Journal*, which had been set up by the Soviets in the context of the realignment of the communist world.⁷¹ Expanding relations implied attempting to influence these parties: the PCF, on several occasions after 1969 put pressure on smaller parties such as the Belgian and Austrian ones.⁷² With the PCI, a habit of emergency consultations was established.⁷³

The outcome of the 1969 Moscow Conference also led the PCI to intensify its contacts with West European communist parties, though on a different basis. The party concluded from the conference that its position of loyal criticism needed to be followed up by continued attempts to make its views on European and global strategy, on the widening of the movement and on doctrinal pluralism, acceptable to and shared by an ever greater number of parties. This would only be effective, it was argued, if it went hand in hand with demonstrations of continued involvement in the world communist movement and goodwill.⁷⁴ Continuing the party’s older change-from-within strategy, Berlinguer sought to influence the PCF in particular on the issues of European security and collaboration with non-communist forces.⁷⁵ Hence, the two parties initiated intensified contacts with one another with the explicit aim of pressuring one another towards their own project.

However, disagreements on profound issues of doctrine and strategy appeared in full at the bilateral PCF–PCI meeting held in Rome in June 1970. The PCF was opposed both to a differentiated model for socialism in Western Europe and to a specific West European communist strategy in the

European Cold War. A member of the PCF's Bureau politique, J. Denis, argued that this was unrealistic and unsuitable in the context of the recently increased dependence of Western Europe on the United States, thereby referring especially to France and to Pompidou's rapprochement to the US. The French communists conceived the meeting rather as an attempt to persuade the PCI actively to participate in the planned "anti-imperialist conference" of world communist parties.⁷⁶ This project was an initiative of the Soviet Union with the PCF and would elaborate the third chapter of the 1969 Moscow Conference (which the PCI had signed). While the Romanian Communist Party obstructed the initiative because China was not invited, the PCI was reluctant for the same reason.⁷⁷ It was made clear how different the conceptions of internationalism were between the two Western communist parties, by, once more, the PCF's fierce objection against co-operation with non-communist forces in this anti-imperialist initiative.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, the regular contacts between the PCI and PCF made the organization of a number of West European communist conferences possible. The first of these, which took place in London in January 1971, invited for the first time all the West European communist parties, including the otherwise reluctant Dutch and Swedish parties. The theme, "the struggle against monopolies," included an analysis of European and global economic integration on the working classes. The PCF had proposed as a theme "the existence of socialist states and their importance," obviously intended as a realignment maneuver. This was strongly opposed by the PCI and the Nordic parties. What occurred instead was a tendency to taboo all issues touching upon the socialist regimes, their historical and actual significance, their doctrine, and their foreign policy. This could not have been otherwise, as different positions existed. The fact that the choice was between either a "loyal" analysis of the socialist regimes or the absence of a debate on this issue demonstrates the limited potential of the West European communist convergence.

Attention was shifted to matters of domestic strategy (such as alliances, reform policy, relationship to the trade unions), which were as much as possible debated in practical terms rather than in the usual heavy Marxist-Leninist terminology. Discussions involved trade union activity and communist militancy in multinationals, reform strategy, alliances, and so on. Next to a common analysis of the economic situation in Western Europe, the outcome of these meeting in terms of concrete common action was limited. For example, the PCF, although accepting the Italian proposal for

intensified co-ordination between shop stewards operating in different national plants of the same multinational, opposed establishing any structural body for this aim.⁷⁹ Despite the modest outcome, the meeting seems to have made the PCF shift its positions somewhat towards the “Italian” ones. At a bilateral meeting with representatives of the PCI in November 1971, Marchais and Denis displayed a more positive attitude vis-à-vis the EEC, which they now considered as a possible factor promoting security in Europe. They also criticized the modes of interaction in the communist world for their “inefficiency,” and, more fundamentally, called for a joint struggle against the theory of limited sovereignty.⁸⁰ Significantly, the PCI did not pick up on this point. Most probably, the Italian communists did not find it very important. It was clear that it did not apply to them; they had achieved, as a party, a relatively large degree of autonomy in the world communist movement and were less concerned with the doctrines of the world communist movement than was the PCF.

The question of co-operation with other forces on the domestic scene was chosen for the next conference of West European communist parties, held in Brussels in January 1974. It was preceded by an unprecedented number of bi- and multilateral exchanges: a series of preparatory meetings, as well as some topical seminars.⁸¹ Much of the discussions revolved around the question of the EEC. The PCF at this point shifted to the “Italian” view of constructive change inside the EEC institutions. Marchais pragmatically stated that “Europe can be the best and the worst.”⁸² However, the Brussels Conference failed to develop a common program for communist strategy in pluralist and industrialized societies. Firstly, there was no agreement as to whether such a common program should be developed, and if so, whether this forum was appropriate. While the PCI and some smaller parties such as the Belgian one favored this, the most radical “autonomist” parties, such as the Scandinavian ones, opposed any new modeling, given the historical difficulties they had encountered in subtracting themselves from the of models imposed by the world communist movement. As a result, the conference’s resolutions did little more than offer a number of elements of a common analysis of the crisis in Western Europe.

2.2. Between tactical shifts and a European strategy

Alongside the domestic successes and initiatives of the PCF and the PCI, the domestic rise of West European communist parties was a more general phenomenon in these years. The economic crisis that had struck the indrust-

ialized world in 1973 added up to a general revival of Marxist thought, which was the effect of the 1968–1969 radicalization. Not only communists but a wider public on the Left and centre felt the need for a radical alternative and found connections to various old and new strands of Marxist thought. In this context, the changes in Spain and the prominent role of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) greatly impressed the West European Left. The death of Spanish dictator Franco in November 1975 made possible the initiation of a gradual process towards democracy. The PCE had become increasingly influential and active in the underground struggle against the regime and was legalized in April 1977. Led by Santiago Carrillo, it resolutely opted for a moderate and centrist course: it supported the installation of the monarchy in 1976 and co-operated in alliances with all democratic forces of the centre and the Left. Pushed to the centre especially by its main competitor the Socialist Party (PSOE), the PCE considered the establishment of democracy to be the first, indispensable step towards socialism. It continued this line, despite its disappointing poll in the first free elections of 1977 (9.2 per cent), and even though it met with increasing internal resistance.⁸³ Its abandonment of Leninist principles was not only implicit but professed. This went hand in hand with increasingly open and encompassing criticisms of the socialist regimes; already in 1966 Carrillo had condemned the single-party system and political repression in the East.

The conflict between the CPE and the Soviet Union was unconcealed, bitter and continuous throughout the 1970s. It had originated in the 1960s and had various causes. Besides doctrinal disagreements, the PCE, as we have seen, fiercely condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia and expressed disagreement with parts of the final resolutions of the 1969 Moscow Conference. The Soviet Union not only developed friendly relations with the Franco regime in the first half of the 1970s, but also supported several anti-Carrillo groups inside and outside the PCE. The conflict was exacerbated when Carrillo condemned the lack of democracy in the Soviet Union, endorsed the PCI's European strategy and, worse, suggested that the strategic interests of the Soviet Union might differ from those of the West European communists. The Soviet press started a campaign against Carrillo and his 1977 publication *"Eurocommunism" and the State*, which was to become the manifesto of Eurocommunism for many in Spain and Europe.⁸⁴ Carrillo was attacked in the most severe terms in a review published in the Moscow *New Times*, his views being compared to those of "the imperialist adversaries."⁸⁵

While the events in Spain gave a major impulse to the coming about of Eurocommunism, the events in Portugal in 1974–1975 brought the disagreements between the PCI and the PCF once more to the surface. The PCI and PCF had a very different appreciation of the strategy of the Portuguese Communist Party: while the PCI openly criticized the PCP, the PCF presented its strategy as an example for Western Europe. Its appreciation of the PCP tended towards the position of the Soviets, who urged the PCP to develop an even more offensive and vanguard policy. When Marchais and Berlinguer met in September 1975 in Rome, disagreement surfaced not only on this issue but also on Berlinguer's proposal of a West European model for (the transformation to) socialism, which Marchais qualified as "impossible."⁸⁶

The PCF's shift to Eurocommunism was, in the short term, provoked by the party's acute isolation inside the world communist movement. This happened in 1975, in the context of the preparations for the second conference of European communist and workers' parties, which was held in East Berlin in June 1976.⁸⁷ While much of the literature has understood the Berlin Conference and the PCF's open criticism of the Soviet Union on this occasion as the expression or the result of Eurocommunism,⁸⁸ it should be seen rather as a central cause behind the PCF's shift towards Eurocommunism. The PCF found itself acutely isolated on the issues of détente and proletarian internationalism. Paradoxically, its position of criticism of the Soviet Union, which departed from what was, in some ways, an *opposite* point of view to that held by the PCI, led it to approach the latter party and move away from the former. In May 1975 the PCF protested against the WCM line on détente by issuing a statement which said that the central confrontation in the preparation process was between those who wished to combine détente with the revolutionary struggle, and those who would "go easy on imperialism, for the sake of diplomatic considerations or domestic opportunities," by which it targeted both the PCI and the CPSU.⁸⁹ The French delegation to the preparatory meeting of November 1975, led by Kanapa, strongly criticized the Soviets with regard to the "confusion on détente," the "non-revolutionary understanding of peace," and "class collaboration on an international level."⁹⁰ Kanapa even perceived an alliance on this question between the PCI (which co-organized the conference) and the Soviet Union, both of which, in his view, favored a non-aggressive strategy towards the West.⁹¹

Moreover, the French were isolated in their wish to debate proletarian

internationalism openly and link it back to Leninist doctrine. It was not supported in this by the Soviet Union, which had an interest in avoiding theoretical and doctrinal discussions on the matter. This was so because it was subject to heavy pressure from the “autonomist” parties such as the Yugoslavs, and the Romanians and the PCI, and because it wished to hold as many parties as possible together.⁹² The conference texts spoke of “international solidarity” instead of internationalism, a change which the PCF only accepted in December 1977—and only temporarily. All this led the PCF, even more than before, to disconnect its internationalism from the actual Soviet Union and the actual world communist movement. This was the meaning behind Kanapa’s affirmation that the Soviet Union was not the touchstone of internationalism, but rather represented a retreat from internationalism.⁹³ The party’s historical internationalism developed at this stage into an even more abstract and theoretical form of internationalism, which did not correspond to the actual situation. As the situation in the world communist movement demonstrated the wide gap in perspective between the PCF on the one hand and the PCI and PCE on the other, the former party’s shift to Eurocommunism can only be seen as lacking substance.⁹⁴ However, it was also the expression of a deeply rooted need for international alliances; it represented a “choice by exclusion” and an opportunity swiftly taken up, which, while it might not provide a serious long-term strategy, could not harm the party either. With respect to the issue of peaceful coexistence, Eurocommunism grew out of the convergence of *opposite* criticisms of Soviet strategy in Western Europe: while the PCF called for a more aggressive policy towards the West, the PCI called for an intensified policy of détente.

In July 1975, against the backdrop of the Portuguese revolution, the PCI and PCE signed a declaration on the democratic principles of socialism. This was followed in November 1975 by a similar PCI-PCF statement.⁹⁵ This was followed by a Marchais–Berlinguer summit in June 1976, and a three-party summit in Madrid in March 1977. Eurocommunism presented itself in these texts as a commitment to parliamentary democracy and to a peaceful and legal transition to socialism based on parliamentary and extra-parliamentary alliances and on the gradual reform of the economy and the expansion of democratic rights. On the other hand, it maintained Marxist-Leninist elements, such as the class struggle and the concept of the communist party. With respect to “really existing socialism” all three major Eurocommunist parties declared that the kind of socialism they were striving for

would be very different from the experiences in the East, and emphasized the rules of autonomy and non-interference in the communist world.⁹⁶

The conference of communist parties of Europe held in June 1976 in East Berlin assured the acceptance of Eurocommunism in the world communist movement. Freedom of speech for the Eurocommunist parties was great on this occasion. Carrillo compared the world communist movement to the Roman Church, affirmed that “we communists do not have a guiding centre,” and went as far as to question the value of the Bolshevik Revolution. Marchais affirmed that “...conferences like this one in our view no longer correspond to the needs of our time.” The French leader furthermore strongly argued against *any* common strategy. Berlinguer avoided polemics and discussions of doctrine, emphasizing instead the common strategy for peaceful coexistence and progress in Europe. Thanks largely to the collaboration between the PCI-PCF-PCE and the Romanian and Yugoslav parties, the conference resolutions were little more than the assessment of diversity. They did not mention any particular role or position for the Soviet Union, and emphasized the voluntary character of adherence to the movement and collaboration with non-communist forces.⁹⁷ The apparent agreement of the three main Eurocommunist leaders on this occasion demonstrated the effectiveness of the lobby-group character of Eurocommunism and its capacity to obstruct authoritarian campaigns in the world communist movement. It gave proof of a common view on what communism and internationalism were *not*, in terms of organization, strategy and doctrine.

The PCI had the most “maximalist” view on what Eurocommunism should be. As we have seen, it understood Eurocommunism, firstly, as a European strategy in which the developments of several West European countries towards socialism could occur; and secondly, as a proposal for a model for (the transition to) socialism in countries with a liberal-democratic political system and in an advanced stage of capitalism. For the PCE, the strategic dimension was equally important: it saw Eurocommunism as the urgently needed international alliance system to back its domestic strategy. It largely shared the PCI’s views on the need for dynamic détente, on Europe as a force going counter to the bloc system, on change from within the EEC, and on the acceptance of American military presence in Western Europe.⁹⁸ It was, however, less inclined towards the acceptance of a new model for socialist transition—even though this would be radically different from, and much more relevant to, its own experience than the models of the Soviet Union or the people’s democracies. Apart from a different

judgement on the desirability of such a new model, the conceptions of socialism and the doctrinal points of departure underlying the PCI and PCE's domestic strategy differed. For instance, the PCE, unlike the PCI, explicitly abandoned the dictatorship of the proletariat.⁹⁹ The PCI did not formally abandon the concept, but, as mentioned, increasingly replaced it with the Gramscian concept of hegemony.

Furthermore, the PCI and the PCE differed with regard to relations with the communist states and the world communist movement. The attacks by the PCE on the Soviet Union were sharper and its analysis of the socialist regimes went more *au fond* and were less self-censured than those of the PCI. Carrillo went further than any other European communist had ever done by stating in his "*Eurocommunism and the State*" that the Soviet Union was "not a true workers' democracy."¹⁰⁰ Significantly, the PCI leaders, while defending Carrillo for reasons of principle in the polemics with the Soviets that followed the publication of the book, abstained from commenting on this crucial statement.¹⁰¹ Different perspectives between the two parties also existed on what J.B. Urban has called the "evangelical face" of Eurocommunism. For both parties, one of the aims of Eurocommunism was positively to influence the development of the socialist regimes of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union; while Carrillo affirmed this in "*Eurocommunism and the State*", for the PCI it was the logical outcome of the "change from within" policy. However, the two parties adopted different tactics, the PCE being far more polemical and the PCI preferring to avoid open conflicts and to await the effects of the Eurocommunist successes on the societies and regimes in Eastern Europe. The PCI here went beyond its usual agnosticism and relativism in terms of the conception of socialism: without clearly saying so, it accorded to Eurocommunism the value of an example (although not a model) to socialism in other parts of the world.¹⁰²

The PCF differed from both the PCI and the PCE on all these points. It agreed with the PCE on the undesirability of the development of a new model. Its conception of socialism, in theory, remained far closer to the Soviet one than the one endorsed by the PCI and the PCE.¹⁰³ Most often hiding behind arguments of non-interference and party autonomy, it did not raise the question of interaction between the developments in communism in the East and the West and seemed not to have any evangelical ambition. Its historical internationalism was not fundamentally changed under the influence of Eurocommunism. However polemical its criticisms on the Soviet Union, it could not, in contrast to its two counterparts, bring

itself to question both the strategic and doctrinal value of 1917. Nor did it widen its appreciation of “really existing socialism” into a broader discussion of the nature of socialism.

2.3. *The end of Eurocommunism*

While in the 1970s and 1980s the hypothesis existed that Eurocommunism was tacitly accepted and even tactically endorsed by the Soviets,¹⁰⁴ it is clear now that the latter considered Eurocommunism to be a threat. The Soviet Union did accept a minimalist type of polycentrism, such as the West European communist cluster in the early 1970s. However, Eurocommunism was unacceptable for a strategic reason and for reasons of doctrine. Around 1975 it seemed to be an expression of European dynamic détente, with the potential of upsetting the “social and political status quo” in Europe. To the Soviets, the PCI’s vision of international strategy was probably more upsetting when based on the perspective of dynamic détente and Europe as a force “overcoming,” and hence destroying, the blocs, than when based on a full shift to NATO.¹⁰⁵ Besides, as a movement positioning itself *inside* the Soviet-aligned communist world, Eurocommunism challenged Soviet “orthodox” doctrine. The continued adherence to the world communist movement of, in particular, the PCI was problematic to the Soviets, as the Eurocommunist development towards “heterodoxy” did indeed go hand in hand with a growing cultural and ideological influence on other communist parties in the East and West, on the Left in Western Europe, and on reform-minded communists in the East. Many of the former Prague Spring leaders and other reform-minded communists in Eastern Europe have observed the influence of PCI and Eurocommunist ideas on the reform movements in the East throughout the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. At least two signers of Charter 77, Z. Mlynář and J. Hájek, have always maintained that Eurocommunism was their “strongest card” in dealing with the communist regime.¹⁰⁶

The Soviet, Czechoslovak and East German communist parties, and maybe others, tried to dissuade the Eurocommunist parties from continuing their line through various more or less aggressive tactics. Throughout 1975–1977 a campaign in the Soviet press against Carrillo, the PCF leadership, and, to a lesser extent, the PCI leadership was intended to discredit these leaders in front of world communism and their respective parties. Heavy direct pressure was put on the PCF, as its “disobedience” was most upsetting and as it was expected to be more responsive to pressure than the

other two parties. Just before the Madrid summit of 1977, the Soviets sent a threatening letter to the PCF urging it to obstruct the meeting. The letter was also meant to destabilize the leadership and their authority vis-  -vis the party, as it condemned the policies of "certain leaders," Kanapa and Marchais in particular.¹⁰⁷ According to the Mitrokhin archive, the KGB launched a campaign to discredit Berlinguer by spreading rumors about his alleged involvement in fraudulent transactions.¹⁰⁸ More incidents occurred between the Eurocommunist parties and the Czechoslovak CPCS. The latter's daily, *Rude Pravo*, attacked the PCI for disregarding internationalism and the general laws of socialism, and (in vain) put pressure on the party's publishing house, Editori Riuniti, to block the printing of works by the former Prague Spring protagonists Goldst  cker, Pelik  n and   ik.¹⁰⁹

The break-up of Eurocommunism in 1978–1979 was immediately provoked by a dramatic shift in the PCF, by which it caused a rift in the *Union de la Gauche*, turned back to full loyalty to the Soviet Union, and distanced itself from most of the Eurocommunist ideas. In the spring of 1979, the "overall positive" evaluation of the socialist regimes, including the Soviet Union, was reassessed in the documents of the 23rd Party Congress. In January 1980, in contrast to the PCI and the PCE, the PCF supported the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. As it was domestic strategy which had, in the short term, provoked the changes in the PCF's internationalism, it was now also the domestic changes which led the party to revise its internationalism. The break-up of the *Union de la gauche* by the PCF occurred after the March 1978 elections, which marked not only a general defeat of the Left but also the first victory of the PS over the PCF (22.8 per cent to 20.6 per cent).¹¹⁰ Relations between the two parties had been openly problematic since 1977, the disagreements being centered around defense policy. While the PCF had adopted the *tous azimuts* strategy in anticipation of a shift away by the socialists from their Atlantic orientation, Mitterrand refused to give in to this and in turn proposed a referendum on the issue in July 1977. The suspicions that had existed between the two parties since the beginning of the alliance became dominant. The acute crisis in the PCF which occurred after the election defeat of 1978 led it to understand that it was first and foremost the Socialist Party which gained from the alliance, in terms of votes and political initiative.¹¹¹ While this fact was, on a practical level, sufficient to question the utility of the alliance, and on a doctrinal level went against the vanguard role concept, in terms of identity it threatened to jeopardize the teleology and the communists' *specific* project as being different from that of reformist socialists.

The hypothesis has always existed that the break-up of the Left alliance in France was the result of direct Soviet interference, but archival evidence for this has not so far come to light. What can be said with certainty, though, is that the totality of pressure on the Marchais-Kanapa duo—from the Soviet Union, from the wider world communist movement, and from a growing number of conservatives in the leadership and in the wider party—caused this major reassessment of domestic and international policies.¹¹² As after 1968, the shift back into Soviet-loyal internationalism did not mean that the divergence of interests in terms of European strategy was resolved, or that it was no longer perceived. Rather, in the context of an acute identity crisis provoked by the fear of losing its specificity with regard to reformist socialism, it was considered of crucial importance to re-emphasize the communist teleology. The fact that the party had given up in practice, if not in theory, many elements of Marxism-Leninism, only added to this need. Since the PCF did not dispose of *any other* internationalism than the one linked to the world communist movement and the Soviet Union as carriers of a historical and global process, the sharp turn back into this movement was considered necessary.

It started to occur to all three parties involved that the costs connected to Eurocommunism outweighed its benefits. In the case of the PCF, this was so because Eurocommunism upset the parameters of its traditional internationalism at a moment in which the party's identity seemed once more to be questioned. For the PCE, this was so because of the domestic situation and the lack of clarity as to the further development of domestic strategy.¹¹³ The PCI's commitment to Eurocommunism also proved to be limited and contradictory, and it turned its attention to other niches of international solidarity.¹¹⁴ While its tactics of avoiding direct confrontation with the socialist regimes might have avoided grave conflicts and permitted the party to exercise an indirect influence on the civil societies of Eastern Europe, this was also a way to camouflage the ambivalence in its own evaluation of "really existing socialism" and how it related to its own concept of socialism. The party's constant shifting after 1968 between relativist forms of criticism of the socialist regimes on the one hand, and absolute, "evangelical" forms of criticism on the other hand, reflected this ambivalence. Moreover, it remained unclear how, in the PCI's conception, Eurocommunism and "Third Way" communism in Europe would relate *strategically* to the Soviet Union.

NOTES

- 1 This chapter is partially based on primary sources and party archives, particularly regarding the relations between these parties and the regional meetings. Besides this I dwell on the secondary literature on Eurocommunism.
- 2 The thesis on the direct link between the Czechoslovak crisis of 1968 and Eurocommunism is argued, for example, in Urban, "The Four Faces of Eurocommunism," pp. 36–38.
- 3 For example, Azcarante, "What is Eurocommunism?," p. 18. See also S. Carrillo's famous statement that "Czechoslovakia was the last straw."
- 4 Many of Eurocommunism's contemporary observers have failed to notice the important differences in strategy and the conception of socialism between the PCI, PCF and PCE during Eurocommunism. For an example of this see Legvold, "The Soviet Union and West European Communism," *passim*.
- 5 Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, p. 113.
- 6 Zubok, "The Soviet Union and European Integration," p. 92; Petro, Rubinstein, *Russian Foreign Policy*, pp. 290–291.
- 7 This point is made in Zubok, "The Soviet Union and European Integration," p. 93. However, it has also been noted that the (official and semi-official) debates in the Soviet Union on Europe in the 1970s were marked by a tension between co-operation with Western Europe and exploitation of the latter's conflict with the United States, and co-operation with the United States against a "third force" Europe. Neumann, *Russia and the Idea of Europe*, pp. 141–157.
- 8 Dewisha, *The Kremlin*, p. 374.
- 9 Garton Ash, *In Europe's Name*, esp. pp. 57–58 and pp. 283–285.
- 10 Sarotte, *Dealing with the Devil*, pp. 170–177.
- 11 Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, chapter 5.
- 12 While the Paris agreement of 1973 recognized both North and South Vietnam, North Vietnamese troops marched into Saigon in 1975. Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, chapter 7.
- 13 Petro, Rubinstein, *Russian Foreign Policy*, p. 292.
- 14 More detail on the effect of the Helsinki agreements on the dissident movements can be found in Hitchcock, *The Struggle for Europe*, pp. 301–310. With regard to Czechoslovakia specifically, see Gordon Skilling, *Charter 77*, esp. pp. 209–212. However, counter-narratives of East European dissidents have been proposed, which emphasize rather the frustration caused by the promises of Helsinki and the lack of domestic change. See Kaldor, *The Imaginary War*, pp. 122.
- 15 See also the points listed in chapter 1 with regard to the Soviets' interest in the West European communist parties in the 1960s and 1970s.
- 16 Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, pp. 360–361.
- 17 Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation*, pp. 389–393.
- 18 Maxwell, *The Making of Portuguese Democracy*, pp. 142–146. On US intervention in Portugal see Del Pero, "Kissinger e la politica estera americana nel mediterraneo," pp. 973–988.
- 19 Noted in Pons, "L'Italia e il PCI nella politica estera," p. 936.
- 20 "Incontro delegazione PCSU 2/12/70," APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 93.

- 21 Pons, "La formazione della politica internazionale," o.c.
- 22 Berlinguer developed and explained the new strategy in Berlinguer, "Riflessioni sull'Italia dopo gli eventi di Cile," in *Rinascita*, 28/9/73, 5/10/73 and 12/10/73. These are published in: Berlinguer, Tato, *La questione comunista*, pp. 609–639.
- 23 On the DC in the early 1970s see Gualtieri, *L'Italia dal 1943 al 1992*, chapter 5.
- 24 The far Left Red Brigades started with regular terrorist attacks on state buildings and politicians. This culminated in the kidnapping and assassination of DC party head A. Moro in 1978. On left-wing terrorism in connection with the radicalization of 1968–1969, see, for example, Tarrow, "Violence and Institutionalisation after the Italian Protest Cycle," pp. 41–69.
- 25 For more detail on the political and economic situation in Italy leading up to the historical compromise, see Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia*, pp. 469–482.
- 26 Much of the (Italian) literature has focused on the question of the offensive or rather defensive character of the *Compromesso storico*, and on its innovative character versus the older roots. For a discussion of these points see, for example, Flores, Gallerano, *Sul PCI*, pp. 237–256; and Graziani, *Nei punti alti*, chapter 7. For a more recent view see Ragusa, *I comunisti*, pp. 227–228.
- 27 Various party texts and articles by Berlinguer on the shift in PCI foreign policy have been published in Berlinguer, Tato, *La politica internazionale dei comunisti italiani*.
- 28 Berlinguer affirmed at a meeting with the Soviets in 1973 that Europe was not envisaged as a neutral force or as a third force, but as a force "overcoming the blocs." Pons, "La politica internazionale."
- 29 Berlinguer did so in an interview with the non-communist paper *Corriere della sera* on the eve of the June 1976 elections. Immediately after this declaration, however, Berlinguer downplayed the interpretation that NATO would serve as a protective shield for socialism in Europe. See, for example, "I comunisti e il Patto atlantico," in Berlinguer, Tato, *La politica internazionale*, pp. 161–162.
- 30 The incoherence between dynamic détente and the shift to NATO has also been noted in Pons, "La politica internazionale."
- 31 See the discussion of this in chapter 3.
- 32 Moreover, there was a strong "from above" component in the historical compromise strategy. This is also argued in Ragusa, *I comunisti*, pp. 227–228.
- 33 See Njølstad, "The Carter Administration and Italy," p. 81; Gualtieri, "Il PCI, la DC," pp. 81–82. It is still unclear whether there was more direct American interference in Italian politics in the early and mid-1970s.
- 34 The continuity between Eurocommunism, as far as the PCI is concerned, and polycentrism has been noted widely in the literature. For a useful discussion see Urban, "The Four Faces," pp. 36–59.
- 35 Although systematic studies on this topic are still lacking, several contemporary witnesses and actors have testified to the influence of PCI and Gramscian ideas on reform-minded communists and civil society in Czechoslovakia and other socialist countries. On the other hand, the PCI abstained from giving straightforward support to the most outspoken opponents of these regimes, either internal dissidents or emigrants. See Jilek, "La Tchécoslovaquie et son Parti communiste," pp. 71–81.

- 36 See, for example, the records of the meeting of 1–3/7/71 in APCF, BP, 8/7/71.
- 37 APCF, BP, 13/8/70.
- 38 These points were decided at the BP meeting of 13/8/70. On the second point: “[We should]...develop our theoretical explanations regarding the nature and the class content of the policy of peaceful coexistence.”
- 39 APCF, Sec, 16/10/70 and 23/10/70.
- 40 The report is published in Kanapa, *Coexistence pacifique et lutte de classe*.
- 41 For a similar view see Mélandri, “La France et l’Alliance atlantique,” pp. 524–525.
- 42 For more detail on French foreign policy under Pompidou see Mélandri, “La France et l’Alliance atlantique,” passim; Bernstein, Rioux, *The Pompidou Years*, pp. 16–26.
- 43 APCF, BP, 8/7/71.
- 44 Andrew, Mitrokhin, *The Mithokhin Archive*, pp. 395–396.
- 45 Quoted in Altherr, “Le PCF face à l’Union soviétique,” p. 48.
- 46 For the first interpretation see, for example, Lange, Vannicelli, *The Communist Parties of Italy, France and Spain*. For the second type of interpretation see, for example, Altherr, “Le PCF face à l’Union soviétique.”
- 47 The thesis that the PCF wanted ultimately to dominate the Left alliance is widely accepted and is demonstrated especially by the eventual break-up of the alliance provoked by the PCF in 1979. See Hincker, *Le Parti communiste au carrefour*, passim.
- 48 Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 622.
- 49 Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 668.
- 50 APCF, BP, 10/9/70.
- 51 Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 562.
- 52 The determining role of Kanapa here is widely recognized in the literature. See, for example, Lavau, “L’URSS et eux...,” p. 201.
- 53 The fact that the PCF in 1977 took part in the elections for the European Parliament, even though it had for a long time campaigned against the holding of such elections, can demonstrate the pragmatic character of its shift to Europe. For a similar view on the relative non-importance of the EEC to PCF strategy see Kriegel, “The French Communist Party,” p. 82.
- 54 This is not to argue that the PCF did not envisage close economic ties between a future socialist France and the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, as Kriegel observes. Kriegel, “The French Communist Party,” p. 84.
- 55 This has also been argued by Robrieux, *La secte*, p. 75.
- 56 The emphasis on national sovereignty in the 1975 programme of the PCF has also been noted in Tiersky, “Le PCF et la détente,” p. 220.
- 57 Streiff, *Kanapa*, pp. 756–757.
- 58 The CPSU letter and the PCF reply have been published in “L’échange de lettres PCUS-PCF de 1977,” pp. 36–49. See also Hincker, *Le PC au carrefour*, pp. 167–168.
- 59 One of these beneficiaries of Soviet support might have been J. Thorez-Vermeersch. Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 675. Also the Czechoslovak Communist Party put pressure on the PCF. After the PCF had changed its position on *L’Aveu* in

- 1976, and following its support for Charter 77, the CPCS sent a threatening letter to the PCF. See Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 670.
- 60 Moreover, in the late 1970s a PCF delegation in Moscow lobbied for the “Leningrad trial” to be held publicly and for the cancelling of the death penalties. APCF, BP, 18/12/70.
- 61 On the effect of the *Gulag Archipelago* on the French (intellectual) Left see Khilnani, *Arguing Revolution*, pp. 128–131.
- 62 Altherr, “Le PCF face à l’Union soviétique,” p. 49.
- 63 Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 620.
- 64 Communication by the BP: *Humanité*, 20/12/75, p. 1.
- 65 Elleinstein, *Histoire de l’URSS*, p. 303.
- 66 Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, pp. 313–314.
- 67 Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 599; and Marcou, *Les pieds d’argile*, p. 46.
- 68 The PCF delegation was in Moscow on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution; it was led by P. Laurent and included Kanapa. Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 750.
- 69 For a different view, see Steinkühler, *Eurokommunismus im Widerspruch*, passim. For a similar view on the diversity which the meeting brought to the surface—which, however, does not draw the right conclusions from this regarding the weakness of Eurocommunism—see Marcou, *Les pieds d’argile*, pp. 32–33.
- 70 In a Soviet publication on the coming about of the Berlin Conference of 1976, the 1974 meeting of communist parties of Western Europe is listed as a major step towards greater unity in the communist world. Zagladin, *Europe and the Communists*, pp. 15–23. Fejtő earlier foresaw this: Fejtő *The French Communist Party*, p. 204.
- 71 APCF, BP, 20/6/69 and 18/9/69. The French title of the journal was *Nouvelle revue internationale*.
- 72 While the PCB was put under pressure to “combat leftism” and to obstruct the organisation of Trotskyite groups (APCF, BP, 3/12/70), the KPÖ received an abundant amount of PCF texts on doctrine (APCF, BP, 3/1/69). Moreover, the PCF directly interfered in the Greek Communist Party. APCF, BP, September through December 1970.
- 73 APCF, 2/7/70. The PCF leadership was at this point very satisfied with this form of co-operation.
- 74 APCI, Dir, 20/6/69, passim.
- 75 APCI, Dir, 20/6/9, 006–1742.
- 76 “Incontro con delegazione PCF a Roma, 25–26/6/70,” APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 89.
- 77 “Incontro con i dirigenti del PC Rumeno 3–4/7/70,” APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 91.
- 78 “Incontro con delegazione PCF a Roma, 25–26/6/70,” APCI, Fund Berlinguer, 89.
- 79 APCF, BP, 7/1/70.
- 80 “Incontro PCF Parigi 16–17/11/71,” APCI, Fondo Berlinguer, 102.
- 81 Listed in Timmermann, “Konflikt und Krise im Weltkommunismus,” p. 18.
- 82 The documents of the 1974 conference are published in Steinkühler, *Eurokommunismus im Widerspruch*, pp. 37–48.

- 83 For more on PCE strategy in this period see Bell, "Eurocommunism and the Spanish CP."
- 84 Carrillo, "*Eurocommunism*" and the State.
- 85 Andrew, Mitrokhin, *The Mithokhin Archive*, p. 392. On the conflict between the PCE and the Soviet Union in the mid and late 1970s generally, see Menashe, "Eurocommunism and the USSR," pp. 310–314.
- 86 Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 641.
- 87 Some of the literature has overlooked the interplay between the emergence of Eurocommunism and communist party relations inside the WCM, for example Boggs, *The Impasse of European Communism*. Other authors, like Marcou (*Les pieds d'argile*, p. 41) have observed it, but have not drawn conclusions from it as to the nature of Eurocommunism.
- 88 Recently, for example, Lazar, *Le communisme*, p. 41.
- 89 Devlin, "The role of Non-ruling Communist Parties," p. 38.
- 90 Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 637–647.
- 91 Streiff, *Kanapa*, pp. 646–647.
- 92 Both Romania and Yugoslavia attended the Conference, which the Soviets promoted as a sign of growing unity. Their presence, however, added to the evidence of disunity at the conference. See Devlin, "The Role of Non-ruling Communist Parties," p. 37.
- 93 Quoted in Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 750.
- 94 This view is endorsed, for example, in Kriegel, "The international role," passim.
- 95 The Eurocommunist statements of 1975–1977, and the full list of meetings (including those with the British and Japanese parties), are published in Lange, Vannicelli, *The Communist Parties of Italy, France and Spain*.
- 96 For three useful discussions of the general characteristics of Eurocommunism among the many publications on this topic, see, for example, Boggs, *The Impasse of Eurocommunism*, pp. 18–22; Griffith, "The diplomacy of Eurocommunism"; and Urban, "The Four Faces."
- 97 For more detail on the speeches and the resolutions of the conference see Devlin, "The Role of Non-ruling Communist Parties," pp. 41–44.
- 98 The CPE, while it did request Spanish entry into the EEC, did not wish to enter the Atlantic alliance, although it did not express objections to American military bases in Spain.
- 99 The PCE did so in its *Manifesto and Programme of the Communist Party of Spain* of 1976.
- 100 See the famous passage: "The October Revolution has given birth to a state which surely is not a bourgeois state, but which neither corresponds to the proletariat organized into the dominant class; it is not yet a real working people's democracy." Carrillo, "*Eurocommunism*" and the State, p. 172.
- 101 See also Urban, "The Four Faces," p. 53.
- 102 A similar point is made in Urban, "The Four Faces," pp. 52–54.
- 103 It had not, for example, abandoned the idea of "general laws" on the road to socialism.
- 104 In a more recent version of this argument, Narkiewicz has argued that the Soviet Union accommodated to Eurocommunism by 1976. Narkiewicz, *The End of the Bolshevik Dream*, pp. 87–90.

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- 105 This is also noted in Pons, “La politica internazionale.”
- 106 Quoted in Valenta, “Eurocommunism and Eastern Europe,” pp. 48–49. See also Jilek, “La Tchécoslovaquie et son Parti communiste,” pp. 71–81.
- 107 Streiff, *Kanapa*, pp. 675–677.
- 108 Andrew, Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive*, p. 388. It is possible, although not proven, that the KGB attempted to assassinate Berlinguer on the occasion of his trip to Sofia in 1973. This is upheld by Fasanella, Incerti, *Sofia 1973*.
- 109 Jilek, “La Tchécoslovaquie,” pp. 78–79.
- 110 Lazar, “Affinités électives,” p. 153.
- 111 For more detail on the worsening relations between the two parties, on the basis of the Kanapa archives, see Streiff, *Kanapa*, pp. 719–738.
- 112 For example, from 1974 Leroy more or less openly objected to the continuation of the *Union de la Gauche*. Kanapa died in 1978. Streiff, *Kanapa*, p. 665.
- 113 After its disappointing election score of 1977, internal opposition against Carrillo increased, and in June 1981 a conflict broke out in the party over the interpretation of Eurocommunism.
- 114 Throughout the 1970s the PCI intensified its contacts with the Social Democratic parties of Western Europe. For an overview of these contacts see Timmermann, “Democratic Socialists, Eurocommunists and the West.”

CONCLUSIONS TO PART III.

In the aftermath of the Czechoslovak crisis, the line of the PCI and PCF on internationalism was reset on specific issues. While these changes made the continuation of their Soviet-aligned internationalism acceptable to the bulk of the rank and file of these parties, as well as, generally, to their main domestic political partners, it did not solve the central problem connected to their internationalism, namely, the implications of Soviet global and European strategy for their domestic strategy. It was the persistence of this problem that led to Eurocommunism in the second half of the 1970s. After 1968, the PCI narrowed down its Soviet-aligned internationalism to the strategic dimension. Doctrine as an underpinning of this alliance was increasingly less important, up to a point where it became clear that the PCI's concept of socialism was very different from the one held by the communist regimes. While the party continued to position itself inside the world communist movement, it watered down its ambition to change the state of affairs from within into assuring for itself a relatively autonomous position. Instead, it focused its attention on the global strategy against imperialism, which permitted it to develop anti-imperialism as a source of legitimation. In Europe, it focused its attention on *détente*. Although it understood *détente* as a dynamic concept, and for this reason included non-communist actors in its international strategy, it chose to disregard the fact that the most powerful actor in this enlarged communist strategy, the Soviet Union, had given proof in 1968 of a static understanding of *détente* as far as the situation in Europe was concerned. The question of whether Soviet European strategy was still supportive of the transition to socialism in Western Europe was a taboo, as became clear from the Manifesto affair.

After 1968 the PCF narrowed down its internationalism to a sense of belonging to a historical process and movement. As in the case of the PCI, at the heart of this lay a problematic relationship with the Soviet Union, its actual strategy and its actual leaders. Its points of reference for the

definition of socialism, as well as for the organization of the communist world and for the elaboration of global strategy, were to do with Leninism and the October Revolution, rather than with the actual situation. This shift occurred as a consequence of the configuration of the party's sources of legitimation, in which revolution played a crucial role. The maintaining and reassessing of its classic concept of revolution, based on the link between 1789 and 1917, permitted the party to revitalize its revolutionary appeal while at the same time giving proof of its national character, and, hence, to increase its emphasis on sovereignty as a source of legitimacy. The fact that the invasion of Czechoslovakia had precisely led to the questioning of the relationship between sovereignty and Soviet-aligned internationalism was willfully ignored by the PCF leadership. The non-renewal of its concepts of revolution and socialism made it impossible to learn from the May '68 events or from the Prague Spring. While its political partners did not systematically object to this, the continued criticism on this issue from communist intellectuals led the party leadership, in the atmosphere of realignment and under Soviet pressure, to undertake an "anti-revisionist" campaign. This resulted in the exclusion of a number of renowned intellectuals, and in the removal of Waldeck Rochet, who had given proof of a concept of internationalism that ignored the furthest implications of Soviet dominance.

Despite the fundamental contradictions in the internationalism of the two parties after 1968, conditions in the early 1970s were such that this did not come to the fore. While the PCI rejoiced at the successes of the "global anti-imperialist struggle," the PCF concentrated on its national strategy of alliance with the socialists. However, by the mid-1970s a number of European and global events seemed to upset the Cold War order: the German settlement, the end of the Vietnam War, the events in Chile, Portugal and Spain, and the successes of the PCI and PCF themselves. These circumstances on the one hand confirmed the defensive nature of Soviet strategy in Europe, and on the other hand seemed to provide the West European communist parties with an opportunity. The temporary convergence of the PCI, PCF and PCE into Eurocommunism was the result. For both the PCI and PCF the continued strategic problem, which went back to the late 1960s, was the profound reason for their shift towards Eurocommunism. In the short term, its emergence was provoked by domestic developments (in both cases) and another acute crisis in relations

with the Soviet Union (in the case of the PCF). However, it soon became clear that the PCI and the PCF had very different, and in some sense opposite, views on European strategy, and that their concepts of socialism lay far apart. Moreover, as the PCF once more appeared unwilling to resist Soviet pressure and unable fundamentally to question “orthodox” doctrine, the PCI shifted in an ambivalent way between its aims to change the world communist movement from within, and unwillingness openly to confront the Soviet Union and other powerful actors of this movement on matters of strategy and doctrine. Hence, Eurocommunism was unable to become more than a pressure group inside the world communist movement, a limitation which had already become clear in 1968. Born out of a convergence based on opposite perspectives on internationalism, doctrine and strategy, by the late 1970s Eurocommunism ended up as a movement which did not want to be one.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Internationalism, Détente, Revolution

The invasion of Czechoslovakia provoked a profound shock in both the PCI and PCF, first and foremost because it revealed a disconnection between Soviet strategic interests in Europe and their own political strategies in Italy and France. The implications of détente in the Soviet definition were fully revealed in 1968: the Soviet Union and the communist bloc dominated by it gave priority to the defense of its positions on the European continent, that is to say, Soviet dominance over the Eastern part, and limited, indirect influence on the politics and societies of some of the West European countries with significant communist parties. The Soviet leaders considered their strategy in Europe to be necessarily defensive, in view of disarmament talks with the Western powers and an agreement on Germany. The kind of détente favored by the Soviet leaders, which, to a large extent, came about in the 1970s, was based on the consolidation of the political and military blocs and superpower hegemony over their allies (“détente from above”, or “static détente”, in the PCI’s definition).

Between 1965 and 1968, the early stages of East–West détente in Europe were accompanied by the destabilization of both the Atlantic and communist blocs in political and military terms, and particularly the weakening of superpower hegemony. This resulted from a multilevel questioning of Cold War loyalties, by some governments in Eastern and Western Europe vis-à-vis the superpowers, and by segments of public opinion vis-à-vis their government. It raised hopes in Eastern and Western Europe of the end of the Cold War through the disintegration of the blocs. The argument here is not that “détente from below” or “dynamic détente” ceased to exist altogether after 1968. As a parallel process to superpower détente, less visible but important in the longer term, détente from below contributed to bringing about change in the socialist regimes of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. This occurred through the multiple forms of contacts that were established between the civil societies in Eastern and Western

Europe.¹ However, intra-block and domestic change, and their interrelatedness as a dynamic process towards overcoming the bipolar order, was absent from Western Europe after 1968. After 1968, social and political change in Western Europe was not linked to, or significantly helped by, détente. Although the cohesiveness of the Atlantic alliance under American hegemony was only partly restored after 1969, fundamental challenges such as the (ones of 1965–1968) were not repeated in the 1970s.

Thus, those on the European continent who had least to gain from détente as it came about after 1968 were the forces of the West European Left and those working towards radical political and social change. The situation in Europe in the mid-1960s did suggest that East–West détente had the potential to lead to significant social change in the West, especially in the case of countries highly sensitive to international change such as Italy. However, the invasion of Czechoslovakia made it clear that détente—its realities rather than its rhetoric—resulted in a strategic impasse on the Left in Western Europe. This is the historical significance of 1968–1969 for the history of the West European Left in the Cold War context.

The strategic issue for both the PCI and the PCF was connected to other aspects of the crisis of internationalism. The totality of issues that the Czechoslovak crisis brought up for the PCI made it more of a historical disillusionment to this party than to the PCF. To the PCI, the crushing of the Prague Spring was evidence of the wide gap that existed between their conception of socialism and the “orthodox” conception held by the Soviet Union. To the PCF, the question of doctrine was not posed as urgently, as the party leadership, while considering the Prague Spring as “orthodox” (but only just), had not considered it as a useful example of democratic socialism. For both parties, the crisis acutely raised the question of the organization of the world communist movement. The two parties protested against the invasion of Czechoslovakia on behalf of the principle of autonomy for communist parties in the world communist movement, but they did so from very different perspectives. In the case of the PCI, the background to this was its development, from 1956 onwards, of an alternative conception of the world communist movement. This was a polycentric one in which (strategic) unity would be counterbalanced by (doctrinal) diversity.

The PCF’s advocacy of communist party autonomy from the mid-1960s onwards was a tactical matter rather than a question of principle. From 1956, and even more so from the outbreak of the Sino–Soviet conflict, the PCF leaders were dissatisfied with Soviet leadership over the world com-

munist movement. Their underlying idea was not one of a more pluralist and heterogeneous movement, but one in which tight “unity” went hand in hand with the observation of “orthodoxy” and in which the Soviet Communist Party, as the heir to Lenin, played a determining role. It saw for itself specific responsibilities in the world communist movement of the 1960s; this was not only a continuation of its *fille aînée* role but also the result of doubts as to whether the actual Soviet leadership (under Khrushchev as well as under Brezhnev) was capable of taking full responsibility for leading the historical and global movement towards socialism.

Despite the PCI rather than the PCF identifying with the Prague Spring as a socialist project, it was the latter rather than the former party that undertook an active “diplomatic campaign” inside the communist world to avoid a military invasion. Rochet’s active “intra-communist diplomacy” in the summer of 1968 should be understood neither as an attempt to make the Prague Spring acceptable to the world communist movement, nor as a Soviet-instigated mission. Rochet’s endeavor was rather an expression of his view on internationalism in its most idealistic and naive sense. The underlying belief was that, as interests in the communist world *by necessity* converged, conflicts could be resolved through discussion. This view on internationalism was an attempt to “re-idealize” the movement on the basis of “unity” and “orthodoxy”, which, while loyally accepting far-reaching Soviet dominance, ignored the furthest implications of it. How unrealistic this view was became clear from the acute and bitter conflict between the PCF and the Soviet Communist Party in July 1968, and, eventually, from the invasion itself.

In neither party did the invasion of Czechoslovakia provoke the questioning of Soviet-aligned internationalism as a basic matter of identity. Following the dissent the open conflict between West European communism and Moscow and its allies evolved into a phase of renegotiating the terms of the two parties’ relations with Moscow. Despite the obvious fact that for both the PCI and PCF this was an unequal relation of power, the former party succeeded to some extent in resisting Soviet pressures and actually expanding its spaces of practical and ideological autonomy. To be sure, it did make concessions and was realigned on specific issues, for example in its implicit agreement to taboo the Czechoslovak events after 1969. Berlinguer’s strategy was to use the party’s leverage, created by the dissent over the invasion, to forge increased autonomy. By doing so, the PCI secured for itself a singular position in the world communist movement,

from which it was to benefit in the following decade. Its autonomy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union increased, particularly in terms of practical relations and modes of operation within the world communist movement. Its ideological autonomy was also expanded, but it remained limited in that it continued to be impossible for the party to question the socialist nature of the Soviet Union and the East European regimes.

By June 1969 the PCF was largely realigned to Soviet positions regarding the organization of the world communist movement, strategy and doctrine. The ousting of Rochet and his replacement by Marchais was proof of the party's increased dependence on the Soviet Union with respect to the mid-1960s. Rochet's elimination was merely the most visible fact in a much broader "normalization" process which took place in the party between late 1968 and 1970, under strong pressure not only from the Soviets and East Germans but also from a number of influential "conservative" PCF leaders. It was a matter of suppressing the timid yet visible attempt, initiated in 1965, to develop a new concept of internationalism, which would have meant a significant break with the past. In 1965, Rochet had demonstrated himself willing to challenge Soviet strategy in Europe. Furthermore, Rochet and Kanapa displayed signs of developing a "dynamic" concept of détente, similar to the one held by the PCI. Yet this went counter to the deepest intuitions shared by the majority of the leadership regarding the un-revolutionary nature of peaceful coexistence.

The (partial) realignment of the PCI and PCF took place in the context of the "normalization" of the communist world in the wake of the invasion. The Soviet leaders and their allies exerted extremely intense pressure on all dissenting communist parties in order to realign them in terms of the official narrative of the Czechoslovak events, in terms of discipline, and in terms of broader doctrinal and strategic issues. The dissent over the invasion caused a serious blow to Soviet leadership over the world communist movement and was felt in Moscow as such, which is demonstrated by the efforts undertaken in Moscow to "convince" the dissenting parties of its positions. Operating jointly with other West European communist parties and with Romania and Yugoslavia, the PCI and PCF succeeded in cutting off some of the sharpest edges of this process: the organization of a new permanent structure of the world communist movement was blocked as a result of their continued opposition to it. Yet the World Conference of Communist Parties of 1969 was not, as has been argued, the "institutionalization of diversity" in the world communist movement. The Moscow con-

ference was the outcome of a process of renegotiating the terms of power and dominance by the Soviet Communist Party in the world communist movement. It did open up the possibility for some communist parties unilaterally to disagree with aspects of the internationalist line as laid down, rather than accepting alternative views on internationalist unity of action, such as the *allargamento*. It did not allow for a comprehensive alternative to Soviet dominance in ideological, organizational or strategic terms.

In terms of substance, the resetting of internationalism after 1968 in the two parties was centered, paradoxically, on exactly the issue on which these parties had based their argumentation against the invasion. For the PCI this issue was détente; for the PCF it was sovereignty. After 1968 and throughout the 1970s, while the PCI maintained the illusion that Soviet strategy was reconcilable with a dynamic concept of détente “from below”, the PCF maintained the illusion that it was reconcilable with national sovereignty. In the PCI leadership, the debates immediately following the invasion had focused on détente and on the understanding that the Soviet concept of it was different from its own. However, it was impossible for the PCI fundamentally to question détente, which was not only central to its internationalism but also to its domestic strategy. Hence, the party leadership introduced the distinction between “static” and “dynamic” détente, thereby constantly advocating the latter while carefully avoiding accusing the Soviet Union or others in the world communist movement of holding the former view. However, the fact that Czechoslovakia had revealed precisely the static Soviet conception of détente was tabooed after 1969.

It was necessary for the PCI to continue emphasizing the benefits of détente to domestic and international strategy, as after 1969 this became the main, even the only, justification for its continued belonging to the Soviet-dominated communist world. This was so because, after 1968, the party increasingly took on a relativist position with regard to official world communist movement doctrine. As Czechoslovakia had demonstrated how limited the shared ideological ground was between the PCI and the WCM, the benefits of belonging to this movement needed to be explained in terms of European and global strategy. This is why, after 1969, the party narrowed down its internationalism to the strategic dimension and why it intensified the attention given to anti-imperialism, both as a WCM strategy and as a domestic source of legitimation.

After 1968 the PCI oscillated between the continuation of its “changing WCM from within” line on the one hand, and disengagement on the other.

More than before 1968 the ties that bound the PCI to the Soviet-aligned communist world were based on a silent agreement of mutual cynicism. On the one hand, the PCI leaders understood that the Soviet and East European communist parties had no interest in “excommunicating” them. On the other hand, the latter understood that, despite many and profound disagreements, the PCI leadership was not willing to break its ties with the world communist movement—indeed, the fact that it had not done so over Czechoslovakia was the best indication of this. During the 1970s and Eurocommunism, the PCI constantly shifted between a “relativist” position, by which it did not wish to make claims as to the superiority of (West) European concepts of socialism with regard to Eastern Europe, and an “evangelical” position, by which it wished, instead, to exercise ideological and political influence over both the regimes and (dissident) civil societies of Eastern Europe.

After 1968 the PCF reconstructed its internationalism and its identity more generally on the basis of national sovereignty as a source of legitimation. It did so despite the obvious fact that the Czechoslovak crisis had demonstrated the limitedness of state sovereignty in the Cold War and despite the fact that the Brezhnev Doctrine had blatantly undermined the PCF’s argumentation against the invasion. However, the PCF needed to focus in its program and discourses on this issue, as its domestic sources of legitimation had been narrowed down to the question of French sovereignty and resistance to NATO. The continued usage of sovereignty required a shift in the party’s ideological bases of internationalism towards what I have termed “historical internationalism”. In its historical internationalism the PCF emphasized its belonging to the historical world communist movement and to the tradition of 1917 and Leninism, rather than to the actual communist world and socialist regimes. Its relationship to the Soviet Union became first and foremost a relationship to the historical party of Lenin and to the Bolshevik Revolution.

For the PCF, the shift to historical internationalism was a way of avoiding addressing what had been the core problem in its relations with the Soviet Union since the mid-1960s and what continued to be up to the late 1970s, namely, the latter’s European strategy in the context of Gaullist détente. This strategy made abstraction of actual international politics in the era of superpower détente, pretending that it did not matter to its domestic strategy. To the PCF leadership, in contrast to their Italian counterparts, the un-revolutionary character of Soviet détente had already

become clear in 1965 on the occasion of the Soviets' support for de Gaulle. Furthermore, the ease with which the Soviet Communist Party (and the East German one) shifted in their appreciation of the PCF's strategy in May–June 1968—from an essentially positive one at the time of the events to a highly critical one during the “normalization”—evidenced the very secondary role accorded to West European communist strategy and the cause of revolution in the West. Domestically, the central reason behind its shift to historical internationalism was the need for the party to reaffirm its revolutionary identity. This was a matter of urgency in the specific context of the French Left in the aftermath of May '68. In this context, the problem of revolution was at the heart of *all* political and ideological discussions; however, a total breakdown of the traditional concept of revolution had started and much uncertainty existed as to its meaning. At this point the PCF made the choice not to renew its understanding of revolution, instead maintaining its traditional concept, based on what was for the PCF the inextricable link between 1789 and 1917.

Although the two parties' criticism of Soviet strategy started from a radically different view, it converged to some extent on the issue of détente: the PCI's criticism of the “static” concept of détente was in some sense similar to the PCF's objections to the “social status quo” in Europe. However, international conditions in the early 1970s were such that they did not bring the contradictions between “static” and “dynamic” détente to the fore. The “normalization” of the communist bloc imposed by the Soviet Union made it possible for the latter to carry out negotiations with West Germany and the United States while avoiding serious crises inside the communist bloc. At the same time, the “global anti-imperialist struggle” demonstrated its potential in Asia and Africa. Hence, there seemed little point for the PCI, for which anti-imperialism came to be so important, to distance itself from this movement. However, the fact that the PCI leadership had understood that a divergence existed with the Soviet Union on the issue of détente became clear through the *multiplication* of its international alliances in the 1970s: the West European Left, the liberation movements in the Third World, the Mediterranean area, the EEC, the socialist regimes and the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, China, and, by the mid-1970s, NATO. Highly problematic was the fact that the party opened up the scope of its international alliances to the point that neither the ideological basis nor the strategic coherence of this totality of alliances were clear.

As a constant feature of the PCF's internationalism, the party only con-

sidered it worthwhile making explicit the underlying strategic conflict with the Soviet Union under the following circumstances: when an acute conflict with the Soviet Communist Party was provoked by the latter, and when an urgent domestic reason was perceived and governmental power seemed within reach. These conditions were met in the mid-1970s, and they explain the PCF's temporary shift to Eurocommunism. The PCI also intended Eurocommunism as a network of international alliances to safeguard its domestic strategy, the *Compromesso storico* of 1973, which can be seen as the PCI's own domestic "détente from above". The understanding, which emerged in 1968, that the Soviet-led communist world was in any case insufficient and most probably unreliable as an international ally for the establishment of democratic socialism in Western Europe, led the PCI to undertake dramatic shifts in its international(ist) policy in the mid-1970s: the shift to the acceptance of NATO, followed by the embracing of Eurocommunism. The shift to NATO was underpinned by the realization that dynamic détente was not going to take place in the foreseeable future. Eurocommunism, then, presented itself as an opportunity to return to the lost dream of dynamic détente: while operating inside the world movement of socialist forces, the West European communist parties might at the same time provoke changes in this movement as well as in the Western bloc and capitalist societies.

However, Eurocommunism lacked a coherent perspective, due to uncertainty and disagreement as to how to relate to the Soviet-led communist world in strategic as well as doctrinal terms. Eurocommunism inherited all the shortcomings of the minimalist type of West European communist polycentrism of the mid-1960s, which had become obvious in the impossibility to bring about a West European communist initiative following August 1968. The invasion, the subsequent realignment of the communist world and the static détente that came about, all prevented the West European communist cluster from developing into an actual strategic alliance. It is in this sense that 1968 marked the end rather than the start of Eurocommunism: the events of 1968 indicated the limits of domestic or intra-bloc dissent in terms of changing bloc strategies and internal organization.

ABBREVIATIONS

APCI	Archivio Partito comunista italiano
APCF	Archives Parti communiste français
BP	Bureau politique (PCF)
CC	Central Committee
CGIL	Consiglio italiano generale del lavoro
CGT	Confederazione generale italiana del lavoro
CME	Capitalisme monopoliste d'état
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon)
CPCS	Communist Party of Czechoslovakia
CPS	Communist Party of Slovakia
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
DC	Democrazia cristiana
Dir	Direzione (PCI)
DKP	Deutsche Kommunistische Partei
EEC	European Economic Communities
FGDS	Fédération de la Gauche démocratique et socialiste
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic
KAN	Club of engaged non-party members
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
KPÖ	Kommunistische Partei Österreichs

LLF	<i>Les lettres françaises</i>
LNO	<i>Le nouvel observateur</i>
LTM	<i>Les temps modernes</i>
MLF	Multilateral force
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
PCE	Comunist Party of Spain
PCI	Partito comunista italiano
PCF	Parti communiste français
PCP	Communist Party of Portugal
PS	Parti socialiste
PSI	Partito socialista italiano
PSIUP	Partito socialista di unità proletario
PSU	Parti socialiste unifié
PSU	Partito socialista unitario
SAPMDB	Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv
Sec	Secretariat (PCF)
SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
WCM	World communist movement
WTO	Warsaw Treaty Organisation (Warsaw Pact)
UEC	Union des étudiants communistes
UN	United Nations
UNEF	Union nationale des étudiants français
UP	Ufficio politico (PCI)
ZPA-SED	Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED

ANNEX 1.

Membership figures for the PCI and PCF, 1956–1979

	PCF	PCI
1956		2,035,353
1957	330,000*	1,825,342
1958		1,818,606
1959		1,789,269
1960	300,000*	1,792,974
1961	300,000*	1,728,620
1962	318,000	1,630,550
1963	330,000	1,630,000
1964	330,000	1,615,296
1965		
1966	341,000	1,575,935
1967	350,000	1,534,705
1968		1,502,862
1969	380,000	1,503,816
1970	380,000	1,507,047
1971	375,000	1,521,642
1972	390,000	1,584,659
1973	410,000	1,623,082
1974	450,000	1,657,825
1975	491,000	1,730,453
1976		1,814,263
1977		1,814,154
1978	520,000	1,790,450
1979		1,761,297

Numbers marked with * are estimations.

Source: Lazar, *Maisons rouges*, p. 398.

ANNEX 2.

Electoral results for the PCI and PCF (per cent), 1956–1979

	PCI	PCF
1956		25.9
1958	22.7	18.8
1962		21.8
1963	25.3	
1967		22.5
1968	26.9	20.0
1969		21.5*
1972	27.8	
1973		21.4
1976	34.4	
1978		20.6
1979	30.4	

Source: Lazar, “Affinités électives”.

* The PCF vote for 1969 refers to votes for the PCF candidate in the first round of the presidential elections. All other figures refer to parliamentary elections.

PRIMARY SOURCES

ARCHIVES*

*Archivio Partito comunista italiano (APCI):
Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome*

I.

Direzione (Dir): records of the Direzione meetings with attached documents (microfilm)

Ufficio politico (UP): records of the Ufficio politico meetings with attached documents (microfilm)

Segreteria: records of the Secretariat meetings (microfilm)

Comitato centrale (CC): records of the CC meetings

Estero (Est): collection of documents regarding foreign countries (correspondence with foreign political parties, reports of meetings abroad, study documents, information bulletins)

These collections have been consulted for the years 1968 and 1969.

II.

Fund "Berlinguer": papers of E. Berlinguer, includes study documents, reports of meetings, correspondence with other communist parties, and so on.

Collection: "Mondo operaio internazionale 1960–1984"

Boxes: 15 to 102.

* Press is not included in this list. The press of the PCI and PCF, as well as the French and Italian newspapers and journals used, are referred to in the text.

*Archives Parti communiste français (APCF):
Place Col. Fabien, Paris*

I.

Bureau politique (BP): incomplete records of the meetings of the BP, includes the agenda and the conclusions of the meetings*

Secrétariat (Sec): incomplete records of the Secretariat meetings, includes the agenda and the conclusions of the meetings

These collections were consulted for the period 1965 to 1970.

II.

Fund "Fajon": papers of E. Fajon, including internal letters, copies of articles in communist press, reports of international communist conferences

Boxes: 1 to 12.

Fund "Waldeck Rochet–Provenance Secrétariat Marchais": papers of Waldeck Rochet, after 1968 transferred to the Secretariat of Marchais, including reports of meetings, preparations of letters and speeches, personal study papers, correspondence with other communist parties

Boxes: 5 to 27.

Fund "Événements en Tchécoslovaquie", including correspondence with other communist parties regarding the Czechoslovak crisis, internal notes, press statements, and so on.

"Archives du Secrétariat"

Boxes: 1 (6 files), and 2 (6 files)

"Tchécoslovaquie 1967–1979, transmis par Plissonnier": 3 files

East German state and Communist Party archives

Zentrales Parteiarchiv SED (ZPA-SED), Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMDB), Berlin

Boxes: DY 30/3489 to 3521 (Büro W. Ulbricht), DY 30 IV 2/2.035 (Büro H. Axen)

Politisches Archiv, Auswärtiges Amt, Berlin

Boxes: 24, 40, C 47, C

* At the time of my consultation, the full minutes of the BP and Secretariat were not accessible, nor were the audio recordings of the Central Committee meetings.

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